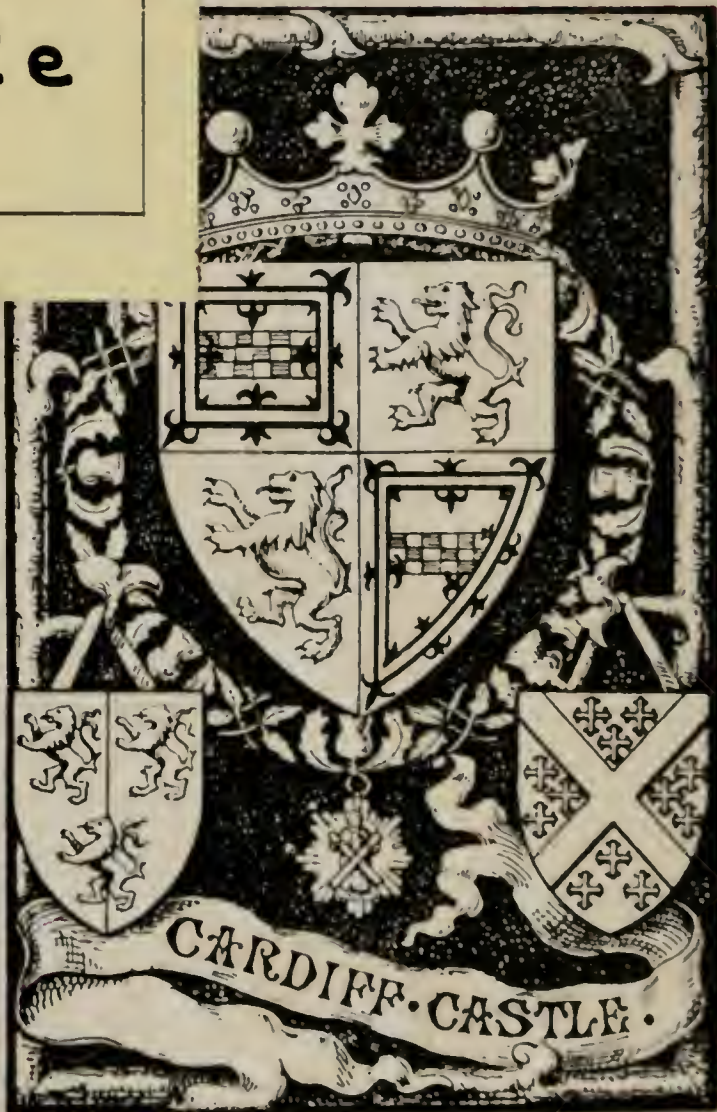


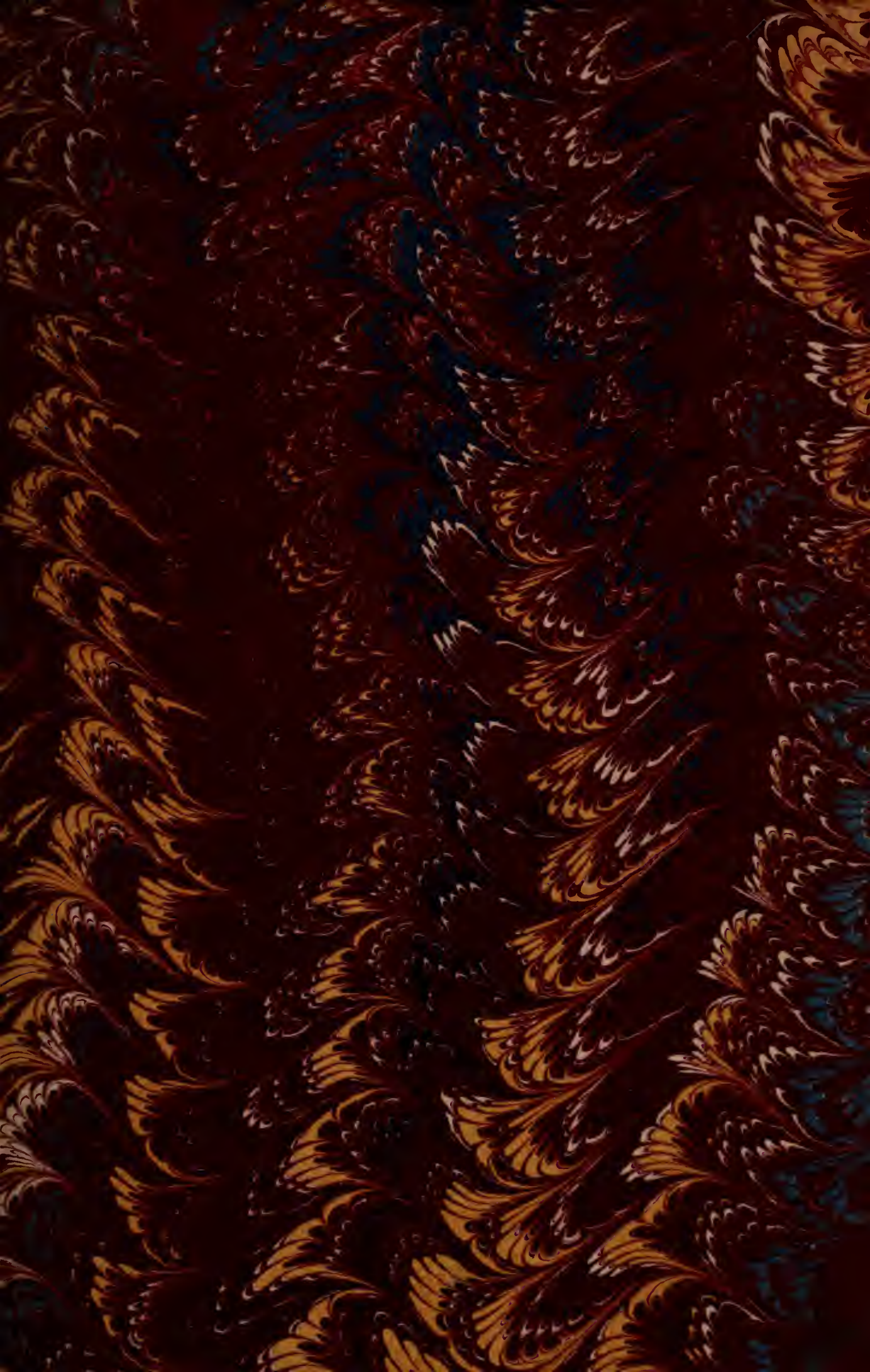
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THE
LEAGUER OF LATHOM.

A Tale of the Civil War in Lancashire.

BY
WILLIAM HARRISON AINSWORTH,

AUTHOR OF

“PRESTON FIGHT,” “BOSCOBEL,” “MANCHESTER REBELS,” “TOWER
OF LONDON,” “OLD SAINT PAUL’S,” &c. &c. &c.

'Twas when they raised, 'mid sap and siege,
The banners of their rightful liege,
At their she-captain's call;
Who, miracle of womankind!
Lent mettle to the meanest hind
That mann'd her castle wall.

WILLIAM STEWART ROSE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

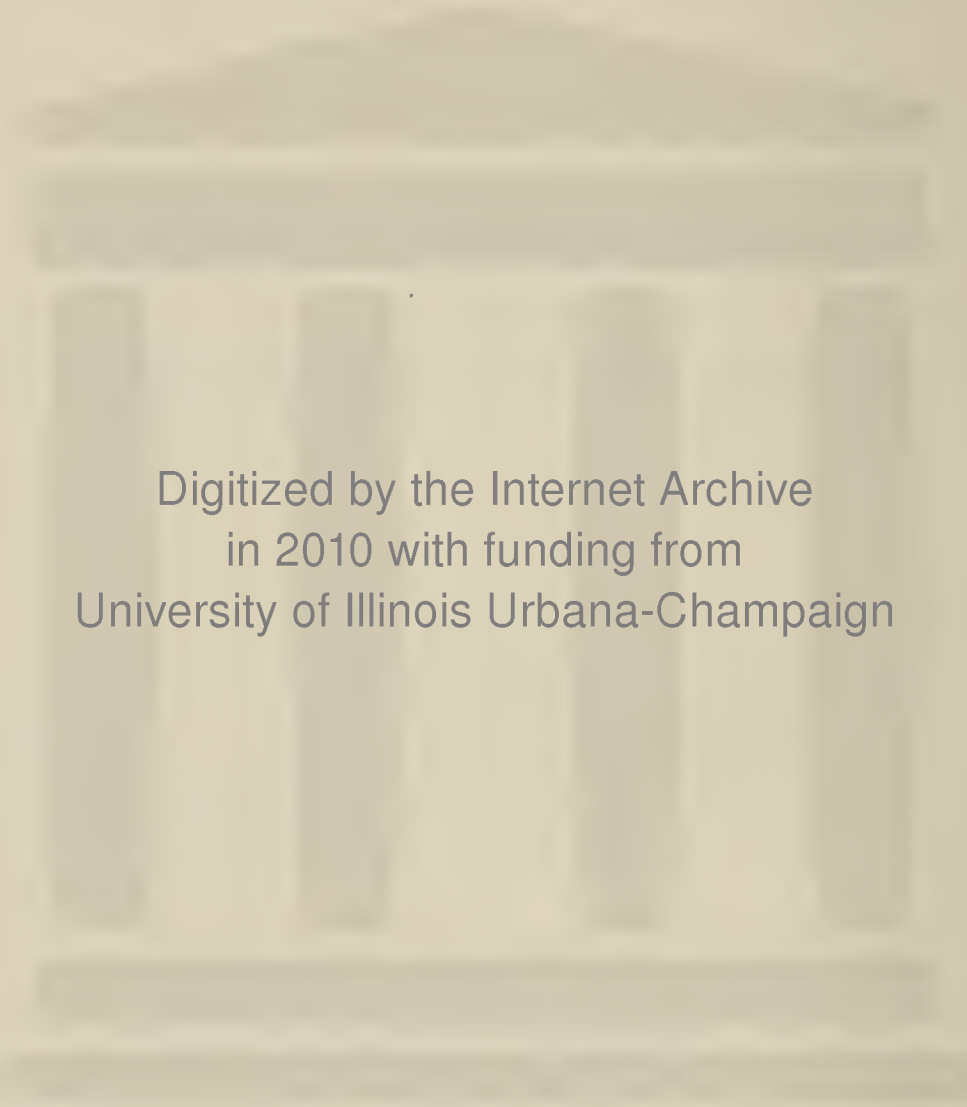
VOL. III.

LONDON:

TINSLEY BROTHERS, 8, CATHERINE STREET, STRAND.

1876.

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THE
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Book the Fifth.

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THE BELEAGUERED MANSION.

XVIII.

OF THE DARING DEEDS DONE BY THE CAVALIERS IN THE
SORTIE; AND HOW THE NEW FORT WAS TAKEN BY
STANDISH.

AT an early hour next day, Captain Foxe having received his orders from Major Farrington, mounted to the summit of the Eagle Tower, accompanied by a soldier bearing a pair of flags.

As soon as he had gained his post he looked around to see whether anything indicated that the enemy suspected the meditated attack. But there was no unusual movement amongst them.

The morning was bright and clear, and he could perceive every object distinctly, without the aid of a spy-glass, though he had one with him.

Four camps were in view, but there was no unwonted stir in any of them. He saw the men assembling in answer to the morning call, and he likewise beheld small parties moving towards the trenches and fortifications to relieve guard. But the numbers were not greater than usual, nor did the besiegers quicken their march.

Satisfied with this distant survey, he next examined the fortifications, that now completely encircled the besieged mansion. No doubt these earthworks and batteries, though ill-provided with cannon, presented a very formidable appearance, and it seemed absolutely necessary for the security of the place that they should be destroyed.

Captain Foxe had just completed his

survey, when turning round he perceived Gertrude, and bade her good-morrow.

“I am sent by the countess for information,” she said. “As you are aware, there is to be an early morning service for the officers and men chosen for the attack; and before proceeding to the chapel, her ladyship desired to know if all is quiet without.”

“Her ladyship need have no uneasiness,” rejoined Foxe. “The enemy suspects nothing. We shall take them by surprise—of that I am certain. If you are going to the chapel, I would entreat you to offer up a prayer for me.”

Promising compliance, Gertrude disappeared.

On returning to the countess she told her what she had heard, and the devout dame being freed from all immediate anxiety, proceeded with her daughters to the chapel,

which was crowded with musketeers fully equipped for the conflict, and presented a very striking sight.

Never had Archdeacon Rutter preached a more animated sermon than he did on this occasion.

On the conclusion of the service, the three parties of musketeers, each under the command of a captain and lieutenant, were drawn up in the outer court, and after the countess had addressed a few words to them calculated to rouse their ardour, they prepared to sally forth upon the foe.

As the attacks, though made from various points, were to be simultaneous, it was no sooner ascertained that the two squadrons under the command of Captain Farmer and Captain Molineux Radcliffe were ready to issue from the sally-port in the postern tower, than the gate was thrown open, and

the drawbridge lowered, and Standish and his men dashed out, while Captain Ogle with another party of musketeers, blocked up the gateway, so as to prevent all ingress of the enemy.

At the same time the walls were thronged with marksmen, under the command of Captain Rawsthorne and Lieutenants Waltheu and Halsall.

The engineers in every tower stood beside their guns with lighted match in hand, and only awaited the order to fire.

Need we add that Captain Foxe was at his post?

Just before the attack began, the countess appeared on the Eagle Tower, attended by Gertrude. Captain Foxe did not allow himself to be distracted by their presence, but kept a careful look out.

For a few minutes the countess and her

attendant spoke not a word, and strange to say, scarcely a sound seemed to reach them from beneath.

Their gaze was riveted upon the postern-tower.

Suddenly, the sally-port was opened, and from it poured out with astonishing rapidity a large band of musketeers with Captain Farmer at their head.

While they were forming, another party came forth with equal quickness, under the command of Captain Radcliffe.

Before commencing the attack, the two leaders turned their gaze towards the Eagle Tower, and saw that Captain Foxe waved the red flag to them to advance.

By this time the enemy had taken the alarm, and were gathering thickly in their fortifications, whence they fired upon their assailants, but could not check them in their onset.

Sustained by the musketeers and marksmen on the ramparts of the mansion, who were admirably directed by Captain Rawsthorne, the assailants scaled these bulwarks, and drove the engineers from their guns, killing several, and firing with deadly effect upon the soldiers who came to their relief.

While the conflict was raging in this quarter, Captain Standish, who had issued with his men from the gateway, had attacked another part of the works, and with equal bravery and success.

The attack had not lasted more than quarter of an hour, and already he had gained two batteries, and killed three men with his own hand.

But his main object was to spike the great mortar, and leaving Lieutenant Bretergh and those with him to deal with the cannon on the batteries, he forced his way to the

rising ground on which the huge piece of ordnance was placed.

An attempt was made by the enemy to defend this little fort, but nothing could resist the impetuosity of Standish and his followers.

In an inconceivably short space of time they had climbed the ramparts, and put the engineers to the sword after a brief struggle, and were consequently masters of the fort.

This daring exploit, witnessed from the walls and towers of the mansion, was hailed with shouts.

Striking the wide-mouthed and ponderous piece of ordnance with his sword, and regretting that its enormous weight prevented its removal, Standish ordered it to be spiked, and the work was effectually performed by one of the men who had

come provided with a smith's hammer and nails.

While this was going on, Standish looked up at the Eagle Tower, and perceived that Captain Foxe was giving him a signal to retreat by waving a white flag in such a manner as to intimate that a large body of the enemy was advancing from the camp.

Compelled, however, to tarry for a few minutes longer, Standish looked around, and witnessed the end of a sharp conflict between Lieutenant Worrall and the occupants of an adjoining battery.

Having sprung suddenly into the work, sword in hand, the valiant lieutenant had been instantly surrounded by a host of his foes, but he managed to defend himself against them all till Captain Farmer came to his assistance and delivered him.

At this juncture Standish caught sight

of his friends, and responded to their shout of triumph by waving his sword.

Everywhere success had attended the Cavaliers in their onslaught, though the enemy trebled them in number, and were protected by forts and ramparts. The assailants were supported by the musketeers and cannoniers on the walls and in the towers of the castle; but the latter had to fire carefully for fear of injuring their friends.

But the Cavaliers were so impetuous that they scarcely seemed to need aid. Animated by a burning desire to chastise the insolence of the rebels, and inflict a severe blow upon them, they succeeded almost beyond expectation.

Many daring deeds were done that gave renown to those who performed them. A battery was taken single-handed by Captain Radcliffe, who slew seven men with his own

hand, and a feat almost equally remarkable was achieved by Lieutenant Pesketh.

Ere long, a panic seized the besiegers, who had lost altogether more than fifty men. No prisoners were made by the Royalists, because they had found that the Parliamentary commanders were unwilling to exchange them.

Thus the whole line of fortifications was abandoned, all the cannon were spiked, and as far as possible the works were destroyed. An immense number of muskets were taken.

For some moments the signal given by Captain Foxe was unheeded, the victors being unwilling to retire, but at length Captain Standish prepared to re-enter the castle, and the other leaders followed his example.

Though scattered about, the men were speedily got together, and the retreat was

executed in very good order, albeit a troop of horse, under the command of Colonel Rigby, was close at hand at the time.

But no attempt at interruption was offered, and Rigby, though highly incensed, did not deem it prudent to expose himself to the fire of the garrison.

Thus Standish was allowed to cross the drawbridge, and pass through the gates unmolested, while equal good fortune befel Captain Farmer and Captain Molineux Radcliffe, as they entered the postern-tower.

On descending from the Eagle Tower, the countess found the three victorious squadrons drawn up in the court-yard, and gave them a hearty greeting, telling them how much she was beholden to them, and how highly she appreciated their valour.

“I have always believed, and I now find I was right,” she said, “that I have

nothing to fear from the enemy so long as I possess such valiant soldiers as you."

"We have all vowed to defend your ladyship to the last," cried the men enthusiastically. "And we will keep our oath. God bless the king and the Earl of Derby."

And the court resounded with their shouts, which being taken up by the musketeers on the ramparts, were heard by Rigby and his troop, heightening the rage of the Parliamentary commander, and determining him to take ample revenge.

"Your ladyship will be pleased to hear," said Standish, advancing, "that although we have slain many of the enemy, and brought away their arms, we have not left a man behind."

"That is marvellous, and proves that Heaven is with us," replied the countess. "We should be wanting in gratitude if we

did not return thanks for the great mercy vouchsafed us."

And accompanied by Archdeacon Rutter and her daughters, she proceeded to the chapel, where shortly afterwards all those who had been engaged in the recent conflict were assembled.

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XIX.

HOW A COUNCIL OF WAR WAS HELD BY THE BESIEGERS;
AND HOW A DAY OF FASTING AND PRAYER WAS AP-
POINTED BY FAIRFAX.

NOT satisfied with the damage done by the attack just described, the engineers in the towers kept up a constant fire upon the enemy, and strove to prevent them from repairing the fortifications, and unspiking the cannon.

In this manner the besiegers were harassed throughout the entire day, and at night they were alarmed by a fresh sortie con-

ducted by Captain Chisenhale and Captain Ogle.

Though this sortie was on a small scale, and intended merely as an alarm, it was very well carried out, and produced a singular result.

Reinforcements had just been sent to the trenches by Rigby, and the new-comers, perplexed by the shouts and cries which were heard on all sides, fired upon their friends, whom they mistook for foes, and killed several of them. As in the morning, the Royalists escaped without the loss of a man.

These repeated disasters produced the natural effect. The besiegers lost spirit, and fought badly, and it was evident they would go on still worse, if something was not done to rouse them.

A council of war was therefore held in

the camp, at which Sir Thomas Fairfax and the three commanders were present.

Rigby, whose rage had not yet subsided, and who considered himself aggrieved by the want of attention paid him by the general, was very anxious that the mansion should be assaulted, but Fairfax would not listen to the proposition.

“I have reason to believe that the place is much stronger than we thought,” he said, “and that an assault would be very hazardous. I shall therefore persist in my plan of reducing it by siege. This is slow but sure, whereas if we should be repulsed in an assault, the whole county will ring with the news, hundreds of malignants, who now dare not show their heads, will come here, and immense service will consequently be done to the royal cause.”

“Should the attack prove unsuccessful, I grant that such would be the case,” replied Rigby; “and I know Rosworm is averse to an assault, but I do not think there is any risk, and this slow siege disheartens our men. These last successes of the enemy have greatly disheartened them.”

“Hitherto, we have been very unlucky, it must be owned, and have succeeded in none of our designs,” observed Colonel Assheton. “Our miners have not yet been able to get under the moat, and the scheme to drain the springs on the south-east of the castle that supply the deep well inside has totally failed.”

“We must employ another plan, and drain the well itself,” said Colonel Moore. “I believe that can be accomplished.”

“No doubt,” said Fairfax; “and although we have met with many more obstructions

in our work than might have been expected, we have made good progress. We have cut off all supplies from without. No fresh provisions have been obtained by the garrison, and as their stores will soon run short, they must submit or starve."

"The prisoners last exchanged declare they have plenty of provisions, and can hold out for a couple of months longer," remarked Rigby.

"It is the countess's policy to make it appear so," observed Fairfax. "But it is not possible the garrison can be so well stored."

"A contrary opinion prevails," remarked Rigby. "But I do not think their sallying parties have succeeded in procuring any fresh provisions, and none can have been introduced in any other way."

"You are sure of that?" said Fairfax.

"I am sure of it," replied Rigby. "Since

I took possession of that stand in the park and the windmill neither meat nor flour can have been carried in without our knowledge."

"Then you may be sure the end is not far off," said Fairfax. "The Earl of Derby would never have asked for a free passage for his wife and children had he believed the garrison could long hold out."

"But her ladyship's bold answer seems to have undeceived him, since he now refuses to treat for a surrender," rejoined Rigby.

"I attach little importance to that," said Fairfax. "He well knows her ladyship will be honourably treated. As you say that our men are dispirited by their ill success, and they may haply deem that our undertaking is not approved by Heaven, to-morrow shall be observed as a day of fasting and prayer, and our ministers shall

be enjoined to implore Divine assistance in our behalf."

"Such an injunction will do much good," said Rigby, "and we must see that it is strictly obeyed. With so many zealous ministers as we have in the camp, a good effect cannot fail to be produced. Our men will fight all the better after listening to their discourses."

Both Colonel Assheton and Colonel Moore concurred in the opinion that a day of fasting and supplication would do infinite good, and the order for its rigid observance on the morrow was issued accordingly.

Nor was the injunction neglected. In each camp, as we have said, there were several ministers—many more than were needed—but each had a certain number of listeners to whom he addressed his discourse. All preached against the countess, and all earnestly besought Heaven to aid them in

their endeavours to drive her from her stronghold, denouncing her as a Papist and an idolatress.

One of the most infuriated amongst them took for his text the words of the Prophet : “Put yourselves in array against Babylon round about: all ye that bend the bow shoot at her, spare no arrows, for she hath sinned against the Lord.”

The discourse of this zealot produced the desired effect upon his hearers, and they resolved to carry out his injunctions.

But the soldiers in the trenches were not allowed to pass the day in quiet. Already they had been disturbed in their devotions by an occasional cannon shot falling among them; and at last they were roused to action by shouts and a discharge of musketry that announced that the restless Cavaliers were again at hand.

XX.

HOW A CANNON-SHOT FIRED BY THE BESIEGERS BURST
INTO THE COUNTESS'S CHAMBER.

THE Countess of Derby, as we have shown, was a very early riser, and generally appeared on the parade with her daughters before attending service in the chapel; but on the third morning after the successful attack had been made upon the enemy, she had not quitted her chamber at a somewhat later hour than usual, owing to the unfavourable state of the weather.

The room was situated at the end of the

great gallery in the upper part of the mansion, and had a noble bay window, filled with stained glass, looking towards the south. The furniture was of oak, and richly carved, and the walls were covered with tapestry.

Attached to the room was an ante-chamber, furnished in precisely the same manner, except that it was not provided with a stately bed and a toilette-table. The rooms had formerly been occupied by Earl William and his countess, and in the couch, just alluded to, that pious lady had breathed her last.

On the morning in question the countess was in the ante-chamber, though the door between the rooms usually masked by a piece of arras, was left open. Her private devotions had been finished before she left her bedroom, and she was seated at a table making some additions to a journal, which

she kept in the hope that her lord might one day peruse it.

The last records were very satisfactory. All had gone well. Though the besiegers had completed their trenches and mounted their batteries they could not hold them. Their guns had been silenced, their forts partially destroyed, and if they began the work again, she felt sure that with Heaven's aid the like result would follow. Therefore she was of good heart.

As this journal was intended for no other eye than her lord's, she put down within it her inmost thoughts, and these words now flowed from her pen :

“ Oh, my dear lord, I have an arduous task to perform, and I trust strength may be given me from Above to accomplish it. At times I want support from thee. Oh ! that thou wert with me now, to counsel and encourage me. I know the wish is

vain, yet I cannot repress it. After all, I am only a woman."

When the brave lady had finished this sentence, she closed the little volume, and her breast found relief in a deep sigh.

At that moment her countenance had a different expression from that which it habitually wore. The haughty and resolute look that usually marked her features had disappeared, and a feminine softness succeeded, and lasted so long as she was alone; but when Gertrude entered the room, she instantly shook off the feeling and became determined as ever.

"You have a letter for me, I perceive," she said to the damsel, after bidding her good-morrow. "Whence comes it? From Sir Thomas Fairfax?"

"From the noble lord, your husband, madam," replied Gertrude, giving her the

letter. "The luckless messenger who brought it reached the postern-gate unharmed. There he was struck by a shot from the enemy, but had strength enough left to fling the letter to the guard."

"He should have had a better reward for the service," sighed the countess.

Then opening the letter, and casting her eyes over it, she said :

"My lord approves of my refusal to surrender to Fairfax, and bids me to listen to no propositions, but hold on, as I am certain to be relieved. That is well. Had he commanded otherwise, I could scarce have obeyed him."

"I do not think your ladyship could be forced to surrender to the rebels," observed Gertrude.

"Thou art right, girl," she rejoined. "I will blow up this house and bury us all in

the ruins rather than yield to them, so you know the fate that awaits you, if you stay with me."

"I am not afraid," replied Gertrude, with a firmness equal to her own.

"Thou art a brave girl," cried the countess, approvingly.

At this juncture, the three young ladies Stanley entered the room, and flew towards their mother.

"You have a letter from our dear father," they cried. "Is he coming to drive the enemy away?"

"Not yet," replied the countess.

"He may come too late," cried Lady Henriette Marie. "They say the rebels are more threatening than ever, and are determined to batter down our walls as soon as their cannon will fire properly."

"I am afraid of that terrible mortar," said Lady Kate. "Captain Standish says

they have taken the nails from it, and we may soon expect to hear its dreadful voice again."

"I think the culverin and the saker make noise enough," said the little Lady Amelia. "We are to have that music all day."

"They will cease firing when they find they can do us no harm," said the countess. "By this time they ought to have found out that they can make no impression on our walls."

"But they may damage the house," said Lady Henriette.

As she spoke, a terrible crash was heard in the adjoining chamber, followed by the descent of a heavy body, making it clear that a cannon shot had entered the window, and dropped upon the floor.

The young ladies Stanley screamed, but the countess and Gertrude maintained their composure, and the latter instantly rushed

into the other room to see what had happened.

As she supposed, a ponderous shot had broken the beautiful glass of the bay window, and rolled to the foot of the bed.

"'Tis well your ladyship had left the room ere this occurred," said Gertrude, as the countess came in, followed by her daughters, whose countenances bespoke their alarm.

"Yes, I have been wonderfully preserved," replied the countess.

"But you will not continue to occupy the room, mamma?" cried the Lady Henriette.

"Wherefore not?" rejoined her mother. "Heaven will protect me."

They were examining the shot when the voices of Trioche and others of the household were heard without, praying admit

tance, and the countess bade Gertrude open the door of the ante-chamber.

Great was the delight of these faithful servants to find their noble mistress unhurt, and they were still expressing their satisfaction, when Major Farrington, with Standish and Archdeacon Rutter, made their appearance, and were equally pleased.

“We knew that a shot had struck this part of the building, and feared mischief,” said Major Farrington. “But since your ladyship is safe all is well.”

“I had no such fear, madam,” observed Archdeacon Rutter. “I felt sure Heaven would protect you.”

“The engineer who fired that shot will never fire another,” said Standish. “He was killed next moment by our marksmen, and his place has not yet been taken, as is evident by the silence of the culverin.”

“It may be well that your ladyship should show yourself,” said Major Farrington. “Fears are entertained for your safety.”

“I will go down at once,” replied the countess. “I must perforce change my lodging till that window is repaired, but the enemy shall not drive me from my room.”

“I felt sure of it, madam,” said Gertrude.

Accompanied by her daughters and Archdeacon Rutter, the countess then descended to the parade, where she was enthusiastically received by the officers and men, and shouts resounded from the walls.

By this time the rain had ceased and the morning had become bright and cheerful. After remaining in the court for a few minutes, she proceeded to the chapel to offer up thanks for her preservation.

Meanwhile three or four engineers on

the batteries of the besiegers had been shot, and apparently not a man could be found to work the guns. Thus the enemy ceased firing altogether, and the garrison became completely tranquillised.

But towards evening it seemed certain—from preparations that were then being made—that the mortar would again be tried on the morrow.

XXI.

OF THE EXPERIMENTS MADE BY THE BESIEGERS WITH THE
GREAT MORTAR.

NEXT morning, as Major Farrington, in company with Standish, reconnoitred the enemy from the ramparts, he perceived they were again very busily employed in the sconce which the great mortar was placed. As far as the observers could make out, some two hundred men were collected near the new fort, and it was evident this large force had been brought there to resist any attack.

“I do not like that mortar,” remarked Major Farrington, “and I am persuaded it will give us more trouble than all the rest of their guns put together.”

“It may not prove so formidable as you anticipate,” said Standish. “However, I own it has an ugly look, and should be glad if its large mouth could be stopped, but that does not seem practicable. Nailing it is useless as we have found.”

“Depend upon it, they are going to give it a thorough trial to-day,” said Major Farrington; “and unless I am mistaken some of their commanders are in the sconce to witness the experiment. I will take care they shall not have a very pleasant time of it.”

“If Rigby is there I hope a shot may hit him,” rejoined Standish. “But for him we should not have been plagued by this pestilent mortar.”

Major Farrington then gave orders to

the engineers in all the towers facing the fort in question to concentrate their fire upon it. This was done and carried on so persistently, that at length not a man could be seen above the ramparts.

However, the besiegers were not to be deterred from their design. Suddenly, a thundering sound announced that the mortar had been discharged, and a ponderous stone—the course of which could be traced through the air—passed over the walls, and fell in the court, luckily without doing any damage, though causing great consternation.

No further experiment was made that day, because the engineers in the fort were afraid to work, owing to the incessant fire kept up from the ramparts; but enough had been done to prove the tremendous power of the mortar, and all those who gazed at the stone thought what destruction

would have been caused had it fallen on the top of a tower or on the roof of the mansion.

Next day, on examining the magazine, Major Farrington made the unpleasant discovery that the powder was beginning to run short.

The constant firing from the ramparts and towers that had taken place during the last week had well-nigh exhausted the stock, and although a considerable supply had been obtained from the trenches of the enemy during the sallies, very little was left.

For the first time, the countess became uneasy when she received this alarming intelligence, and she gave peremptory orders that no more powder should be wasted. Not a needless shot must be fired.

Standish and the officers did not share her ladyship's uneasiness, because they felt

certain the trenches would yield a fresh supply, and the men were not altogether pleased by the restraint put upon them. However, they did not dare to disobey orders, and for the present the firing almost wholly ceased.

As if to test their patience, the enemy were more active than usual on that day, and again brought all their ordnance to bear upon the walls.

Six of the cannon were loaded with chain-shot and bars of iron, but happily did little mischief. They then tried their muskets for more than half an hour together, but with no better success. Not a single man on the walls was hit, nor could they provoke a reply.

Later on, they made another experiment with the great mortar, and this time a grenade was thrown at the mansion. It fell in a small court at the back of the

chapel where it exploded, and with such violence that it shook down the walls near it. Again no one was injured, but infinite alarm was caused by the concussion.

The engineers feared that some new fire-balls would next be tried, and men provided with wet hides stood ready to extinguish these combustibles if they fell near the mansion. Luckily the services of these assistants were not required. Only a second stone shot was launched against the stronghold, and did no harm.

But the mortar had now become a terrible engine, and frightened the brave men, who had hitherto derided all the attempts of the enemy.

The greater part of the mansion was built of oak, and though shot proof, it might be set on fire. This seemed now to be the aim of the enemy, and the possibility of such an occurrence filled the

whole garrison with alarm. The staunchest musketeer turned pale when speaking of shells and grenadoes, and many of them asked permission to quit their lodgings in the upper part of the walls.

To shame them from their fears the officers removed to these rooms, but nothing could overcome the dread caused by the mortar, and when next day another grenado fell in the midst of the musketeers it scattered them like so many sheep.

Familiarity, however, with the danger gave them courage, and when they found that grenadoes were not so dangerous as they imagined—no one as yet having been hurt—they began to laugh at them—especially when a couple that were badly aimed, flew over the house.

Just at this time an incident occurred which, although it did not for a moment

shake the fortitude of the countess, caused her great annoyance.

Despite all the firing and the danger to which she was exposed, she had mounted daily—sometimes more than once—to the summit of the Eagle Tower.

One day she was at her post, and surrounded by her usual attendants, when Major Farrington showed her that the engineers in a battery beneath were pointing a culverin against the tower on which she stood. The countess looked on undismayed, and smiled as the shot flew harmlessly past. Shortly afterwards a demi-cannon was fired from an adjacent battery, its mark being evidently the same as the culverin. Shot after shot from both pieces of ordnance followed at short intervals, but the tower remained untouched.

“I would counsel your ladyship to descend,” said Major Farrington, who had watched this display with anxiety. “Those cannoniers have evidently got orders to demolish this tower, and they will not desist from the attempt, unless we stop them. Shall I direct our engineers to fire upon them? They will not do so without orders.”

“Have we sufficient powder?” inquired the countess, in a low voice.

“Enough for this purpose,” he replied. “Not more.”

“Then let the enemy fire on,” said the brave lady. “We must reserve our scanty stock for a more important occasion.”

“I am certain Rigby is in the nearest battery with the culverin,” said Major Farrington. “I can see him now.”

“Say you so?” said the countess, almost fiercely. “Then, by Heaven, he shall not

insult me thus. Give instant orders to return the fire. At any hazard we will silence them."

"I am right glad your ladyship has so resolved," said Major Farrington, as he departed on the errand.

Not till she had enjoyed the gratification of seeing the demi-cannon dismounted by her own engineers did the countess quit her post.

She then descended to the court, feeling perfectly satisfied with the answer she had given to Rigby's insolent challenge.

But her triumph was of short duration. While she was talking to Major Farrington, who had come to meet her, a shot from the culverin struck an angle in the Eagle Tower, making a large breach in the wall, and demolishing part of the staircase.

"Your ladyship has just got down in time," observed Major Farrington. "That

shall be the last stroke of Rigby's malice."

And he made good his word. The culverin did not fire another shot, both engineers being killed.

XXII.

HOW A SUMMONS WAS SENT BY RIGBY TO THE COUNTESS TO YIELD UP THE CASTLE, AND SUE FOR MERCY TO THE PARLIAMENT; AND OF THE ANSWER SHE RETURNED.

THAT night it was very dark and well adapted for a sortie, but as the officers were not allowed to sally forth in consequence of the scarcity of powder, they resorted to a device to annoy the enemy, that proved perfectly successful.

Balls of clay, furnished with a lighted match, such as were used by the musketeers, were flung from the ramparts to-

wards the enemy's works, and quickly attracted the attention of the sentries, who thought an assailing party was at hand.

The alarm was instantly given. Drums were beaten, and shortly afterwards, muskets and periers were fired in the direction of the lights.

For a short time this went on, to the great delight of the spectators on the ramparts, when the besiegers finding the lights continue motionless, suddenly ceased firing. Shouts of laughter from the ramparts explained the trick played upon them.

Next morning the besiegers began to shout loudly in their turn, being evidently desirous of attracting the attention of Major Farrington and the officers of the garrison to a fresh stock of grenadoes and bombs that had just arrived at the works. These they displayed ostentatiously, and pointing significantly to the fort in which the mortar

was placed, vociferated at the top of their voices :

“ We will soon send you some of them.”

Burning with rage, the men would fain have responded to these insults with their guns, but were forbidden to fire.

But the sight of the grenadoes made Major Farrington feel very anxious, and he had a long conference with the countess, during which he represented to her, without any attempt at disguise, the extreme danger to be apprehended from a shower of these terrible projectiles.

Two other persons only were present at the conference. These were Archdeacon Rutter and Captain Standish, but though deeply interested, they offered no opinion.

“ The time has arrived,” said the countess, after some minutes’ reflection, “ when a heavy blow must be struck against the

enemy. At any risk—at any cost—we must deprive him of that mortar.”

“Unquestionably, that would be the heaviest blow that could be dealt him,” rejoined Farrington. “But I doubt if it can be accomplished.”

“I have no such doubt,” said the countess, in a determined tone. “But be the result what it may, the attempt shall be made, and without delay. How say you, Captain Standish?” she added, to him. “Are there not officers and men within the garrison willing to undertake this perilous task?”

“Assuredly, madam,” he rejoined. “There is not an officer or man in the garrison who would refuse to execute any command given him by your ladyship. The more hazardous the task, the better he would like it.”

“I spoke not of zeal or courage,” said

Major Farrington; "but I fear that the bravest and most devoted men will find it impossible to remove that mortar."

"It must be brought away," said the countess.

"It shall be, madam," rejoined Standish. "Some plan shall be devised for its removal, of which Major Farrington himself will approve."

"I am glad to find you are so sanguine," observed the countess. "But I repeat there must be no delay. The plan must be executed forthwith."

Just then, Captain Chisenhale entered, and informed the countess that a trumpeter was at the gate, and brought her ladyship a letter from Colonel Rigby.

"From Rigby!" she exclaimed. "How dares he write to me? Send back the messenger."

"Let me counsel your ladyship to hear

what he has to say," remarked Archdeacon Rutter. "You cannot then reproach yourself hereafter."

"That is good advice," she rejoined. "I will see him. Let the man come to the parade. I will read the letter publicly, that all who list, may hear my answer."

"With your ladyship's permission, I will make that known," said Captain Chisenhale

And he bowed and departed.

Shortly afterwards, the countess proceeded to the parade accompanied by her attendants.

A great number of musketeers were assembled to hear what she had to say to the messenger, who was standing in their midst.

The man, who had a trumpet suspended from his shoulder, bore himself bravely, and returned the fierce looks thrown at him. He had a letter in his belt, and

delivered it to Captain Chisenhale, by whom it was handed to the countess.

While reading the missive she seemed scarcely able to control her indignation, and when she had done, she called out in a loud voice :

“ You shall all hear the message sent me by that insolent fellow Rigby. He tells me this is his last letter, that he will write to me no more, and summons me to yield up to him Lathom House, and all the persons within it, all arms and munitions, and sue for mercy to Parliament. Furthermore, he requires me to return my final answer before two o’clock to-morrow. What think you of this letter ? ”

Cries of indignation resounded on all sides, and menacing looks were cast at the messenger.

“ Come forward, fellow,” cried the countess to the man, who tremblingly

obeyed. "It were a fitting reward for thy presumption to hang thee up at my gates."

"Nay, spare me, I pray your ladyship," cried the poor wretch, seeing how eager all around were to execute the threat. "I could not refuse obedience to Colonel Rigby's command."

"Nay, I waste not my anger on thee. Thou art merely the instrument of a traitor, and shalt go back in safety. Tell the insolent rebel how I received his letter," she added, tearing it in pieces. "Tell him I deride his summons. Never shall he have Lathom House—never! Rather than surrender it to him I will burn it in his sight. We will all perish together. Myself, my children, my soldiers, and my household will seal our loyalty and religion in the same flame. This is my final answer."

As she concluded, loud acclamations arose, and the assemblage shouted with one voice, "We will all die for our noble lord and lady! God save the king!"

With these shouts ringing in his ears, the Trumpet was hurried to the gate, and thrust forth ignominiously, glad to escape with life.

When he got back to Rigby, he told him what had happened, and added, that in his opinion the garrison would never surrender.

"I expected no other answer from that furious woman," he said. "But thou art mistaken as to the garrison. It cannot withstand our next assault."

"Wherefore not?" demanded the Trumpet.

"Because they have no powder," replied Rigby. "That I have just found out."

“I can scarcely think it from what I have just seen and heard,” said the Trumpet.

“’Tis certain, nevertheless,” rejoined Rigby.

XXIII.

SHOWING HOW THE GREAT MORTAR WAS CAPTURED BY
STANDISH AND CHISENHALE.

IMMEDIATELY after the departure of the Trumpet, all the officers of the garrison were summoned to a council, at which it was decided that an attempt should be forthwith made to bring away the mortar, as it was felt that the capture of this terrible engine would inflict the heaviest blow on the enemy, and serve to raise the flagging spirits of their own men.

The best mode of carrying out the enter-

prise was then discussed, and various plans were suggested; the boldest of which, proposed by Captain Standish, met with the approval of the countess and Major Farrington, and was therefore adopted.

It was next settled that the sortie should be made about half an hour before daybreak on the morrow, and the utmost caution was to be observed, so as not to alarm the sentinels of the enemy.

The officers appointed to the dangerous service by the countess were Captains Standish and Chisenhale, with Lieutenants Bretergh and Walthew. But all were to be employed. To Captains Ogle and Foxe the command of the main guard was entrusted. Captain Rawsthorne had charge of the sally-port. Captain Molineux Radcliffe had command of the marksmen and musketeers; and the post assigned to Captain Farmer, with a party of fifty men, was

the parade. Moreover, he had charge of the gateway.

Not only was employment found for every man in the garrison, but the whole of the household, which numbered more than a dozen stout serving-men, had a special duty to perform. They were to be under the command of the steward and Trioche, and were to aid a company of soldiers in levelling the ditch.

No objection was made by any of them. On the contrary, they were proud to be thus employed, and only begged that each of them might be provided with a pistol to be used against the enemy if an opportunity offered.

Never had the garrison been so excited before, because they had never before such a difficult and dangerous task to perform, and even the boldest felt that success was uncertain.

Major Farrington retracted the opinion he had at first expressed as to the impossibility of the feat, but he was secretly anxious; and even the countess herself, despite her undaunted demeanour, was not free from internal misgiving.

The besiegers remained tolerably quiet during the remainder of the day, and only indulged in an occasional shot from a saker or a perier.

Rigby made no experiment with his new grenadoes and fire-balls, reserving them for the following afternoon, when the countess was informed that he had invited Colonel Holland, the governor of Manchester, and several others to witness the destruction of her house.

When this was told her by Major Farrington, she simply remarked:

“I am glad he has asked so many of his friends to witness his own discomfiture.”

None of the garrison retired to rest on that night—neither did the countess.

Long before it was light all were prepared. Captain Radcliffe was on the ramparts with his marksmen and musketeers, and Captain Farmer had assembled his men on the parade.

Provided with strong ropes, shovels, and other implements, the serving-men were ready to set forth, under the command of Trioche and the steward.

It was still dark, when the sally-port was opened, and two companies of musketeers, each numbering fifty men, came forth, respectively commanded by Standish and Chisenhale.

So noiseless were their movements, that their approach was not discovered till they got under the cannon of the battery nearest them, the ramparts of which they scaled in spite of the desperate resistance of the

soldiers, and put all within the fort to the sword.

The noise of this conflict roused all the besiegers from their slumber, but the assailants had successfully accomplished their first object, and secured themselves a retreat. Moreover, they had obtained a fresh supply of powder.

Leaving Bretergh and Walthew with a sufficient number of men to hold the fort, Standish and Chisenhale fought their way along the trenches to the battery on which the mortar was placed.

They were followed in their march by the party of serving-men, not one of whom manifested the slightest fear, though it was their first fight.

The sconce in which the mortar was placed was guarded by fifty men, who fired upon their assailants as they came on, but

could not check their advance, and did them little injury.

From the position of this fort, which has been described as on a rising ground, it was soon found by the Royalists that their muskets were useless. They therefore picked up some of the large stones lying about, and hurled them over the ramparts. The clatter of these missiles on the steel head-pieces was prodigious. Many of the soldiers were stunned and fell to the ground. Others fled. Taking advantage of their confusion, the assailants quickly cleared the ditch surrounding the fort, and scaling the ramparts, killed several of the enemy, and put the rest to flight.

Having thus secured their prize, they gave a loud shout, which was returned by their comrades in the battery they had first taken, and again by the musketeers on the

postern-tower and on the walls of the castle.

The time had now come when the assistance of the serving-men, who had attended them during the attack, was required.

These stout fellows, who, it has been said, were provided with the necessary implements, soon contrived to level the trench, while the musketeers pulled down a portion of the ramparts.

A passage being thus made for the mortar, it was dragged by a score of strong hands from the sconce, then down the side of the mound, and across the now levelled trench.

Thus much was accomplished without opposition. But the enemy were resolved to prevent the removal of the great engine.

A large party of musketeers rushed forward with shouts and attacked the suc-

cessful Royalists, who returned their fire, and a sharp conflict ensued.

However, it did not last long. Aided by Captain Molineux Radcliffe from the walls of the castle, which were within musket-shot, Standish and Chisenhale were soon able to disperse the foe, and moved on as fast as they could with their prize towards the gateway.

Two other attempts were made to check their retreat, but were equally unsuccessful.

The victors were now joined by Bretergh and Walthew with the party from the battery first taken, and their force was sufficient to repel any attack. So they moved on tranquilly under the guns of the garrison.

They had good reason to be satisfied with the result of the sortie. Not only had they secured the grand prize for which

they had come forth, but what was nearly as important, they had obtained a large supply of powder; so that they were now quite easy on that score.

In addition to all these things, snatched from the very teeth of the foe, they brought back with them a great number of muskets, three drums, and five prisoners—the latter captured at the battery from which the mortar was taken.

As the victors entered the gates they were welcomed by the guard with shouts and other demonstrations of delight, but this was nothing compared to the frantic enthusiasm manifested by the soldiers collected in the court-yard at the sight of the mortar.

They could scarcely believe that the terrible engine that had caused them so much alarm was standing before them. They struck it with their guns, they spurned

it, they leaped upon it, they danced round it, and committed a hundred extravagances.

“Ah! monster,” cried one of them, who had jumped inside it, and tried to make it ring with the butt-end of his gun, “we have thee now, and will not let thee go.”

“Little did Rigby think when he had thee cast, in the hope that thou wouldst accomplish our destruction, that thou wouldst soon be turned against himself, and help to deliver us from him.”

This speech was received with loud cheers and laughter by all who heard it, and the mortar rang like an anvil with the blows dealt against it.

The officers did not attempt to check the exuberant delight of the men, for they were almost as much excited themselves.

The countess, who was in the court-yard with her daughters and her customary at-

tendants, was enchanted by the spectacle. The shouts and demonstrations of the men delighted her. She felt that their confidence—if it had been at all shaken—was completely restored, and that henceforth all would go on well.

After watching the spectacle for a few minutes, she desired Major Farrington to bring before her Standish, Chisenhalé, and the other officers, who had assisted in the glorious undertaking, and publicly thanked them for the great service they had rendered her.

“I do not hesitate to declare,” she said in a loud voice, that all might hear her words, “that by your bravery and gallantry you have rescued us all from a cruel foe. You have saved this ancient pile from destruction by fire, and all within its walls from death, for I would have perished

rather than yield, and I know full well you would all have died with me !”

“ We would !” responded a hundred voices.

Allowing these vociferations to subside, she again addressed the officers.

“ Besides this mortar,” she said, “ you have brought me, I am told, a good supply of powder, with several other prizes. These I will receive anon. Our first duty is to Heaven.”

She then proceeded to the chapel followed by all those who had just returned from the successful sortie.

XXIV.

HOW COLONEL HOLLAND PROMISED TO BRING REINFORCEMENTS FROM MANCHESTER.

GREAT was the mortification of Rigby, when he found that the engine, with which he had hoped to accomplish the destruction of Lathom House, had been taken from him; and additional sharpness was added to the stroke by the fact that Colonel Holland had been invited to witness his triumph, and had used great despatch to arrive in time.

Unable to invent any excuses, Rigby

was obliged to confess the truth—neither could he conceal the fact that such great discontent prevailed among his soldiers, that a mutiny was threatened. More than two hundred had run away from the trenches that morning, and these added to the large number killed in the attack of the Royalists, or malignants, as he termed them, made a very serious loss. Nor did he see how the reduction of the garrison could now be accomplished, except by starvation or want of water. He believed that their stock of provisions was getting low, and hoped to drain their well, but so many failures in his plans had occurred that he did not feel very sanguine. The siege might drag on till the countess obtained assistance from the king, or from the Earl of Derby, who he understood had quitted the Isle of Man, and was now in Chester.

After thus explaining his position, he requested Colonel Holland to send him an immediate reinforcement from Manchester.

“I want five hundred men without delay to replace those I have lost,” he said. “I am no longer equal to the task given me. The sorties of the enemy are so frequent, that the soldiers are obliged to guard the trenches for two nights running—sometimes more. By this last attack I have lost more than two hundred of my best men, and at least twenty engineers. I would fain have another mortar, in order that I may make a fresh attempt to burn down the house. I should likewise feel well pleased if you would send Colonel Rosworm to me. He might render me great assistance.”

“I am unable to comply with the latter request,” replied Colonel Holland. “I have already spoken to Rosworm on the

subject, but he absolutely refuses to lend any further aid against the Countess of Derby, and does not seek to disguise his hope that she may be able to hold out. I will bring you the five hundred men you require with as little delay as possible, though their withdrawal from the Manchester garrison will greatly reduce our strength—but I cannot promise you another mortar. However, it is time this long siege should be brought to a close. The heroic defence made by the countess—for heroic it is—is the talk of the whole county, and is damaging our cause while it raises the hopes of the malignants. We must compel her to surrender.”

“I see not how that can be accomplished,” rejoined Rigby. “I have tried every means, but hitherto without success. After the defeat of to-day matters will become worse. As I have just explained to you the sol-

diers refuse to work in the trenches, and many of them have taken to flight. Another such month as I have gone through would compel me to raise the siege. The labour is beyond my strength."

"Well, you shall have the reinforcement you require, and that speedily," replied Colonel Holland. "But you must not relax in your exertions."

"I shall remove the demi-cannon and the culverin from the batteries, or the enemy will obtain possession of them next," said Rigby.

"That will be judicious," rejoined Colonel Holland. "The cannon can be taken back again when I arrive with the reinforcement."

"But by that time the batteries may be destroyed," remarked Rigby.

"Others must then be reared," said Colonel Holland. "Do not let the countess

suppose you are discouraged. Keep up a bold appearance. When I come back we will send her another summons to surrender."

"If we do, she will hang the messenger."

"No, I will take it myself," replied Colonel Holland. "Bold as she is, she will not venture to hang me."

"I am not sure of it," said Rigby. "But I would as soon enter a lion's den, as into her mansion. I should expect to be torn in pieces. She is often on the Eagle Tower. I wish a shot could reach her."

The colloquy then ended, and Colonel Holland set out on his return to Manchester.

XXV.

OF ASAPH THE AVENGER, AND THE TERRIBLE CRIME HE
COMMITTED.

For three days the besiegers remained perfectly quiet, keeping close within the trenches, and not firing a single shot.

Since they had removed all their large cannon the opportunity seemed favourable for making another nocturnal attack, and accordingly, on the second night, Captain Ogle sallied forth with a dozen musketeers. He was fired upon by a party who were lying in ambush near the postern-tower,

but sustained no damage, and brought back more powder and match, together with a prisoner, who declared that he possessed some intelligence of the utmost importance, but refused to communicate it to any one, save the countess herself.

This being reported to her ladyship by Captain Ogle, she resolved to question him, and he was brought before her for that purpose on the following morning.

The interrogation took place in a room adjoining the great banquet-hall.

The prisoner was a strongly-built man with harsh features, and his closely-cropped hair and deportment proclaimed him a rigid Puritan.

His accoutrements were a buff coat and boots, but he had been deprived of his head-piece and belt, and, as was supposed, of all weapons.

He was guarded by a couple of mus-

keteers, who could not force him, even with blows, to make an obeisance to the countess.

She was seated in a high-backed chair, and on either side of her were her daughters, Gertrude, Archdeacon Rutter, Major Farrington, and Standish.

The prisoner surveyed the assemblage sternly, and slightly started when his eye fell upon Gertrude. The damsel had noticed him at the same time, and observed to the countess :

“I recognise the man. He calls himself Asaph the Avenger, and is accounted one of the saints. He was well known to my father.”

“I like not his looks,” replied the countess. “He seems to me of an evil disposition, and full of hatred and malevolence.”

“Such is his character, madam,” said

Gertrude. "For my own part I never could endure him."

At this moment Asaph, who had hitherto been silent, lifted up his voice, and addressing Gertrude, said:

"What dost thou here, in the habitation of Jezebel, thou daughter of a holy and valiant man? It grieveth me to the heart to find thee whom I loved so well, abiding with the enemy."

"Hold thy peace, thou psalm-singing, hypocrite," cried Captain Ogle, striking him with the flat of his sword. "Thou saidst thou hadst important information to give her ladyship. What is it?"

"I have to tell her that Colonel Holland, the righteous governor of Manchester, is bringing large reinforcements to Colonel Rigby. She will therefore be compelled to submit to the mercy of Parliament."

"Art thou a messenger from Rigby,

fellow?" demanded the countess, angrily.

"The man was taken prisoner last night in the trenches," said Captain Ogle.

"I could easily have escaped, as this officer can testify, if he will speak the truth," said Asaph. "But I allowed myself to be captured, because I desired to speak to thee—to warn thee that if thou dost continue to slaughter the saints, thou wilt be cut off by a sudden and violent death—thy soldiers will be slain—thine house destroyed, and turned into a nest of owls, and a den of dragons."

"Take him hence," cried the countess, fiercely. "I said I would hang the next messenger sent to me. This man has dared to usurp the office, and shall not escape the penalty attached to it. Take him hence, and hang him from the walls that all his comrades may behold his punishment."

Before any movement could be made to execute this stern decree, Gertrude threw herself at the countess's feet, and cried :

“Spare him, madam, spare him, I implore you ! It will more accord with your noble character and humane disposition to pardon such a miserable caitiff than to put him to death. He is beneath your resentment.”

The words and the tone in which they were uttered produced an impression on the countess, and seeing it, Gertrude arose and turning to Asaph, said :

“Down on thy knees, rash man. Sue for mercy, and thou shalt obtain it.”

“Never !” exclaimed Asaph, resolutely. “Never will I bend knee to Jezebel. I came not to her to sue for mercy, but to tax her with her crimes, and warn her of her end. Her punishment is at hand. Deeply hath she sinned against the Lord

and she shall die. I have pronounced her doom. The servants of the Lord are in array against her. The broad walls of Babylon shall be utterly broken."

As he finished speaking, he drew forth a pistol, which he had contrived to conceal in his accoutrements, and levelled it at the countess.

So sudden was the act that neither the musketeers nor Captain Ogle could prevent him from discharging the weapon.

No doubt the shot would have been fatal if Gertrude, who had watched him narrowly, and divined his purpose, had not placed herself before her noble mistress, and received in her breast the bullet intended for her—thus preserving the countess's life at the sacrifice of her own.

A cry of horror burst from all around. Rising from her seat at the moment, Lady Derby caught her preserver in her arms,

while the young ladies Stanley crowded round eager to render aid.

The wretch who had done the dreadful deed, looked on aghast—his features expressing the most terrible mental anguish.

“I meant not to kill her,” he cried, almost piteously. “I would have died rather than harm her. Let me obtain her forgiveness, and I will go with you to instant death.”

“Thou shalt go to instant death, thou execrable assassin,” cried Captain Ogle, “but without the forgiveness of thy innocent victim, that thy soul may be sent to the perdition thou so justly meritest.”

Asaph made no further resistance, but was hurried by the musketeers to the small court at the back of the chapel, where it may be remembered a wall had been knocked down by a grenado.

They were followed by Major Farrington and Captain Ogle.

At the door of the chapel they met Doctor Brideoake, who wished to pray with the murderer, but the wretched man sternly rejected the kindly offer.

Though the party moved on as quickly as possible, they were joined by several other musketeers and some of the servants, whose maledictions Asaph had to bear. But he seemed insensible to them, and entirely occupied by silent prayer.

On reaching their destination the two musketeers, who had never quitted their hold of the prisoner, took him to the further end of the little court.

Captain Ogle then bade him take off his buff coat and kneel down, and again asked if the chaplain should pray with him.

“We do not desire to destroy thy soul,” he said.

The offer was rejected as sternly as before, but the murderer begged to be allowed a few minutes to make his peace with Heaven.

This was granted, and the musketeers stayed by him till he had stripped off his accoutrements.

They then withdrew, and joined their comrades, who now numbered nearly a score, at the other end of the court.

The wretch then knelt down, and after passing a few minutes in earnest supplication, held up his hands.

At the signal, more than a dozen muskets were fired, and the assassin fell with his face to the ground, his body being completely riddled with shot.

None pitied him, but several spurned the bleeding carcase, as they would a dead dog.

XXVI.

OF GERTRUDE'S LAST PARTING WITH STANDISH.

MEANWHILE, the wounded damsel had been carefully transported to her own chamber, and laid upon the small bed with which it was furnished.

When Master Holbrook, the surgeon of the garrison, and a man of great skill, entered the room, she had become insensible, and the countess and her daughters, who, with Archdeacon Rutter, were the only persons present, almost feared she had expired.

No pulsation could be felt by the countess, who had placed her hand on the luckless

damsel's wrist. How beautiful she looked even under these sad circumstances! Her eyes were closed, and the colour had fled from her cheeks, but the exquisite outline of her features was perfectly preserved. Her fair tresses having become unbound, streamed on the couch. Even the surgeon, who was rarely touched by such spectacles, was greatly moved.

On examining the wound, he found—as indeed was apparent—that it bled internally, and his grave looks announced that he deemed it fatal.

“Is she gone?” inquired the countess, in broken accents.

“No, madam,” replied Holbrook. “I can revive her, but it will only be for a short time.”

He then poured a few drops from a phial upon a small piece of linen, and applied it to her lips.

Ere long, to the amazement of all the observers, who had watched the result of the experiment with the utmost anxiety, symptoms of returning animation were perceptible.

Opening her eyes, the ill-fated damsel fixed them upon the countess, who was still standing near her.

At first, she did not seem to comprehend her situation, but soon the terrible truth rushed upon her.

Slightly raising herself, she gazed earnestly and inquiringly at the surgeon, whom she recognised, and finding he did not speak, said in a low, but firm voice :

“Tell me ! tell me truly ! Am I wounded to death ?”

“You are,” he replied.

Then, without manifesting any fear, she asked in the same firm tone :

“How long have I to live? Do not deceive me.”

“You may live half an hour—not longer,” was the answer, pronounced very solemnly. “Drink from this phial,” he added, presenting it to her. “’Tis a sovereign elixir, and will help to sustain you.”

She eagerly swallowed a few drops, and returned the phial to him.

“That is all I can do, madam,” observed Holbrook to the countess, as he stepped back and quitted the room.

Forcibly repressing the emotion, by which she was well-nigh overcome, the countess bent down, and kissed the brow of the dying maiden.

“Oh! how can I thank you! You have rendered me many great services—but this is the greatest of all,” she cried, in a voice broken by emotion.

“It is the last service I shall ever render your ladyship!” replied Gertrude. “But I have done no more than my duty—no more than any of your soldiers would have done for you! There is not a single person in this castle, who would not gladly have sacrificed his life to save yours! Farewell, madam—farewell for ever! At this moment, when all else has become indifferent to me, I am gladdened by the thought that you will triumph over your enemies. Think of me, I pray you, in the hour of victory!”

“Doubt it not,” cried the countess. “But for you I should never have gained a victory.”

“Enough,” rejoined Gertrude. “I shall now die content.”

She then looked at the young ladies Stanley, who were gazing tearfully on the scene, and signed to them to come to her.

“You know how dearly I have loved you,” she exclaimed, holding out her arms to them. “Kiss me all of you, I entreat you! I cannot press you to my breast as I long to do, but while life lasts you will be next my heart.”

Approaching singly, each tenderly embraced her.

As they withdrew, Archdeacon Rutter came forward, and said :

“You have now done with the world, and must turn your thoughts to Heaven.”

“I have not quite done with the world, dear and reverend sir,” she rejoined. “There is one other person to whom I would bid farewell, ere I depart.”

“You mean Captain Standish,” observed the countess. “You would see him alone?”

“I would,” replied the dying damsel.

“I will send him to you instantly,” said the countess.

And signing to the others to follow her, she quitted the room.

In another moment Standish entered, evidently quite overcome by grief.

“Can you forgive me?” he cried, taking the hand she extended to him, and pressing it to his lips.

“I have not waited for this moment to forgive you,” she rejoined, fixing her gaze tenderly upon him. “I know you have preferred another, and when I first made the discovery I thought my heart would break—nay, I even meditated revenge, and there were moments when I was so maddened by jealousy that I could have stabbed my rival. But those feelings have long since ceased. I love you still—but it is with a holy, sisterly love. You cannot doubt what I

say, since I tell it you with my dying breath."

"I do not doubt it," cried Standish, in a voice of anguish. "Though you pardon me, I can never pardon myself."

"Think no more of me," she said. "Let no remembrance of me mar your future happiness. Heaven never intended I should be your wife, and though I have reconciled myself to my hard destiny, I feel this death is a boon to me, and has saved me much suffering. May you be happy with Engracia!"

The effort was too much, and she sank back upon the pillow.

Standish thought all was over, and with difficulty repressed a cry.

After remaining quiet for a few moments she again spoke.

"One thing distresses me greatly," she said.

“I cannot see my father—I cannot receive his blessing. But you will see him. Tell him I thought of him, and reproached myself that I have not adequately requited his strong affection for me. Heaven, therefore, has denied me his blessing.”

“I will tell him what you say,” cried Standish. “Have you any further injunction for me?”

“Should you behold my father again, give him this necklace,” she said, taking off a little string of beads; “and now, farewell for ever!”

Seeing she was sinking, Standish flew to open the door, and in another moment the countess and her daughters were kneeling by the bedside.

She beheld them not, for her eyes were closed, but she heard them, and breathed their names.

They were followed by Archdeacon Rutter, who likewise knelt down with Standish, and recited the prayer for the dying. But ere it was ended her spirit had passed away.

XXVII.

HOW THE SOLDIERS OF THE GARRISON LOOKED THEIR LAST
ON THEIR FAVOURITE.

No event had occurred during the siege that caused such a painful sensation as the death of Gertrude Rosworm.

Next to the countess herself, no one was more universally beloved than Gertrude. Her beauty, her courage, her devotion made her the pride of the garrison. All the officers were secretly in love with her, though she favoured none of them. The men adored her, and whenever she

appeared among them, they testified their delight. To catch sight of her figure on the parade, on the Eagle Tower, or in the chapel, was always a gratification to them. To be thus deprived of their favourite by the hand of an assassin was a blow that all felt severely; but if anything could mitigate their regret, it was that she had saved the countess.

However, on that melancholy day, the garrison presented a very different aspect from what it usually wore. Sorrow was depicted on every manly countenance. The young ladies Stanley were overwhelmed with grief, and Lady Derby suffered deeply.

In compliance with the earnest wishes of the soldiers expressed through their officers, they were allowed to behold their favourite once more.

Placed on a bier, in the attire worn when she met her fate, the body of the

unfortunate damsel was conveyed to the chapel. It was partly covered by a black velvet mantle which served as a pall, but the face and upper part of the person could be seen.

As yet the features had lost none of their beauty — nay, perhaps they looked more beautiful than in life—at least, the beholders thought so, and the striking spectacle was never effaced from their remembrance.

Some of the officers were stationed at the door of the chapel, and others inside, while Archdeacon Rutter and Doctor Brideoake were likewise present.

The musketeers came in singly, but lingered not. After gazing for an instant at the lovely and now placid features of the dead, each passed on.

It was touching to see how deeply these stout-hearted men were moved. For the

time they repressed their grief, but gave vent to it when they left the chapel.

All the garrison, at intervals when the men could quit their posts, came to look their last on their favourite.

The body remained there till evening, when it was taken back to the house, and placed in a coffin that had been prepared for it.

At midnight it was brought back again to the chapel, where the funeral rites were performed by Archdeacon Rutter in the presence of the countess and her daughters, the officers, and a great part of the household, both male and female. Many tears were shed on this sad occasion.

The body was then deposited in a vault beneath the chapel.

XXVIII.

HOW A LETTER WAS BROUGHT TO THE COUNTESS FROM
HER HUSBAND.

It was quite a relief to the men, after this depressing event, to be actively engaged against the enemy.

Colonel Holland had arrived with his reinforcements from Manchester, and the ranks of those who had been killed, or had disbanded themselves, were filled up. Batteries and fortifications were once more occupied, and mounted with cannon, and presented a very formidable appearance.

Everything showed that the Leaguer was greatly strengthened, and would be maintained till the besieged were completely worn out, either by starvation, want of water, or want of ammunition.

The countess had been told that her husband had quitted the Isle of Man, but she had not heard direct from him, for of late no messenger had been able to enter the castle.

But a few days after the arrival of Colonel Holland, when the Leaguer, as we said, had become greatly strengthened, a man named Linacre contrived to elude the vigilance of the sentinels, and was admitted at the postern-gate.

He brought a letter for the countess rolled in lead, which he declared was from the earl, her husband, and so it proved.

The letter informed her that he had arrived safely at Chester. The garrison

there was commanded by Lord Molineux, Sir Thomas Tyldesley, Richard Grosvenor, and other Cavaliers, but they were unable to come to her assistance. His lordship, however, had hopes of aid from Prince Rupert, who had succeeded in raising the siege of Newark, and was about to march to York with ten thousand men.

“I have conjured the prince,” he said, “to march through Lancashire and lend you succour, and I trust he will comply with my request. Were his highness so disposed, he could raise the siege of Lathom House in two days, and inflict such a blow on the enemy, as must needs bring to us all the well-affected in the county. I have not yet seen the prince, for I have much to do here, and am striving to get together two or three hundred men. I want money, and though I like it not,

your jewels must be sold. 'Tis a most critical juncture, and if I fail now, all may be lost."

"My lord shall have my jewels," said the countess, as she read this portion of the letter. "But how convey them to him? I must send Standish. He is the only person, who can be relied upon in such an emergency."

She then gave some orders to an attendant, and proceeded to her cabinet, where Standish, who had been summoned by the servant, joined her. He saw she had something of importance to communicate to him.

"You are aware that I have just received a letter from my lord," she began. "He is at Chester with the garrison. He wants money, but as all his property has been sequestered, he can obtain none. I would

fain send him my jewels, which are worth five thousand pounds. Will you convey them to him?"

"I will, madam," he replied. "The task is difficult and dangerous, but I doubt not I can accomplish it."

"You must take half a dozen men with you."

"Not so, madam," he replied. "That would be to invite attack, and then I might be robbed of the treasure. Alone, or with a single attendant, I shall run comparatively little risk."

"You are right," said the countess, approvingly. "Linacre, the man who brought this letter from my lord, may be useful to you. He must have passed through the trenches."

"I had already thought of him," rejoined Standish. "Yes, he will be very useful. I have conversed with him, and like his

manner. He looks like an honest fellow. I will promise him a good reward, if he conducts me safely through the enemy. I doubt not that will tempt him. If it suits your ladyship, I will start on the expedition to-night."

"You are ever prompt," said the countess. "The jewels shall be ready for you. Stay!" she cried, glancing again at the letter. "There is more here that I have not read. My lord, I find, bids me send you with the jewels. So far well. But he likewise wishes you to halt at Knowsley till you hear from him. Perchance, he may meet you there."

"His orders shall be obeyed," replied Standish. "It will be particularly agreeable to me to make halt at Knowsley, as I shall have a chance of seeing Don Fortunio and his daughter."

"I hope you may meet them, and I beg

you will remember me most heartily to them," said the countess.

Standish then withdrew to prepare for the expedition, and confer with his proposed attendant, Tom Linacre.

Linacre undertook to get him safely across the trenches, and past the fortifications, after which Standish felt certain he could make his way through the camp.

Satisfied with the arrangement, he returned to the countess, who gave him three cases, containing the jewels.

"These shall be securely placed beneath my cuirass, madam," he said, "and shall never be taken from me while I live."

XXIX.

HOW STANDISH ENCOUNTERED ROSWORM.

SOME quarter of an hour before the bell tolled midnight, the sentinels of the besiegers stationed on the fortifications near the postern-tower were alarmed by seeing a long line of lights suddenly appear before them, and at once fired in the direction, not suspecting that the lights they beheld were a device contrived by Captain Chisenhale to distract their attention from Standish's departure.

Roused by the shots, their comrades ap-

prehending an attack, quickly joined them, and likewise fired, and some time elapsed before they discovered that a cord hung with lighted matches, and tied to the stump of a tree, had deluded them.

Meanwhile, Standish and his attendant, both well-mounted and well-armed, sallied forth from the great gate, and managed to get across the trench at a point that Linacre had noted, without causing alarm till they were both safe on the other side. Some muskets were then fired at them, but they were soon out of reach, and galloping towards the camp.

It was now so dark that scarcely any object could be discerned, but Standish fancied he could distinguish a horseman approaching them. Whether he was alone, or followed by a small troop, could not be made out, but Standish went boldly on.

“Who goes there?” demanded the horseman.

“A friend,” replied Standish, slackening his pace, for he now felt certain the person was alone, and had made up his mind to shoot him if he offered any hindrance.”

“I heard firing at the trenches, and was going thither,” said the new-comer. “But I have changed my mind, and will return with you to the camp.”

Standish made no reply to the proposition, but drew a pistol from the holster, resolved to disembarrass himself of his enforced companion.

The horseman perceived the action, but without betraying the slightest fear, said:

“You call yourself a friend, but you are about to treat me as an enemy. I am not the enemy of Captain Standish. My eyes are sharper than yours. I knew you at once.”

“Your voice is familiar to me,” replied the young man. “Can it be Colonel Rosworm?”

“It is that most unhappy man,” said the other, in a mournful tone. “In losing my daughter I have lost all that was dear to me on earth. Many hours have not flown since I heard of her death, and I came here at once.”

“With what intent?” demanded Standish, struck by his manner.

“To die!” replied the other. “Since I have lost her, I have no desire to live. I shall find the death I seek from the cannon of Lathom House.”

“This is the madness of grief,” said Standish. “Do not throw your life away. I have something for you, that may yield you comfort, and deter you from your fatal purpose. Almost with her dying breath, she prayed me give you

this string of beads. Little did I deem that I should so soon be able to fulfil her wishes."

And as he spoke, he took the necklace from the small leather bag attached to his girdle, and gave it Rosworm, who pressed it to his lips.

"I know it well," he cried. "I gave it her when a child. Truly, this will be a great comfort to me."

Then overcoming his emotion by a powerful effort, he added:

"Tell me where she lies!"

"In a vault beneath the little chapel of the mansion," replied Standish. "All the garrison mourned for her. The countess, no doubt, will deliver up the body to you, should you desire it."

"No, I will not disturb her," said Rosworm. "But we must separate. We are near the camp."

“Farewell, then!” cried Standish, preparing to dash forward.

“Stay!” cried Rosworm. “You will run great risk of capture. I can help you to pass through the camp.”

Quickening their pace, they were presently challenged by the sentinels, to whom Rosworm called out, upon which they were allowed to pass.

The camp seemed buried in slumber, and was very negligently watched, probably because so many men had been sent to the trenches.

No sentinels were near any of the tents, nor did the party encounter a single patrol.

Rosworm did not quit his friend till he had brought him to the wood that skirted the back of the camp. He then bade him farewell.

“I shall not tarry here,” he said, “since you have induced me to change my design.

I have no sympathy with Rigby, and I hope the Earl of Derby may come speedily and raise the siege of his castle."

He then rode back, while Standish plunged into the wood followed by Linacre.

XXX.

HOW STANDISH FOUND ENGRACIA AT KNOWSLEY.

PERFECTLY well acquainted with the country, Standish had no difficulty in making his way through the wood, nor in traversing the broad moors and avoiding the dangerous morasses that lay between him and his destination. Nor did he meet with any foraging party of the enemy.

It gladdened him, however, to quit this wild and uncultivated district, and enter Knowsley Park, which though sequestered by the Parliament had not been disturbed.

Not knowing whether the house was occupied by the enemy, though he believed they had altogether abandoned it, he proceeded to the stables, and succeeded in rousing a groom, who took charge of the horses, and relieved him of his anxiety as to the Roundheads by telling him they had all gone to the camp at Lathom.

After a time, he obtained admittance to the mansion, and was conducted by a serving-man to a chamber, where he found a large and comfortable bed. Before lying down to slumber, he placed the jewel cases under the pillow.

Captain Standish had been so long accustomed to the garrison reveillé, that not hearing the early beat of the drum, he slept on to a much later hour than usual, and was at last awakened by the entrance of old Randal Fermor, the steward, who had been informed of his arrival by the groom,

and came to see what he could do for him.

“Little did I expect to see you here, sir,” said Randal. “I thought you would never have quitted Lathom.”

“Nor should I unless I had a mission to perform for the countess,” replied Standish. “But tell me! Are Don Fortunio and his daughter still here? We have heard nothing of them of late, and the countess has been very anxious for their safety.”

“Yes, they are here,” replied Randal, “and as comfortable as circumstances will permit. Having a warrant from Sir Thomas Fairfax, authorising him to occupy certain apartments in the mansion, Don Fortunio has never been disturbed. For the last month we have not been troubled by the enemy, and the troop of horse that was quartered here has been removed to the Leaguer. Ah! sir, do you think our brave

lady will be able to hold out? I am told Colonel Holland has brought large reinforcements from Manchester."

"That is true," replied Standish. "But I hope and believe the Earl of Derby himself will come to her aid, and raise the siege."

"Heaven grant he may!" exclaimed Randal. "Were he to show himself, I am sure hundreds would flock to his standard."

"Have you heard from his lordship, Randal?" demanded Standish.

"A week ago there came a messenger from Chester, who told me that his lordship had returned, and wished to ascertain whether Knowsley was still occupied by the enemy. I told him as I have just told you, that they have completely evacuated it, and that his lordship could come hither, if he pleased, with safety."

“Then you may expect him, Randal, but of course he will come secretly.”

“When I heard of your arrival, I thought at first ’twas he,” said the old steward. “But I will now leave you—unless you require my assistance. Breakfast shall be prepared for you in the great hall.”

He then left the chamber, and Standish arose. Before accoutring himself, he ascertained that the jewel cases were safe. Linacre made his appearance in time to buckle on his corslet.

“I know not how long I shall remain here,” said Standish. “But hold yourself in readiness for instant departure.”

Linacre promised obedience.

The apartment Standish had occupied was situated in the great gallery, which now seemed completely deserted, though it had not been robbed of the noble family portraits that adorned it.

As he marched along he perceived Maria in the distance. She instantly recognised him, and uttering a cry of delight, flew towards him, and kissed his hand.

“Oh! how delighted the señorita will be to learn you are come at last!” she exclaimed. “She has been quite in despair, but will now revive. She has never ceased to regret that she left Lathom House.”

All this was spoken in Spanish, but her hearer quite understood it, and made the best reply he could.

“Tell her I am most anxious to see her,” he said. “I only arrived here last night, and may not remain long. I am now going down to breakfast in the banqueting-hall. Perhaps she will join me there.”

“I am sure she will,” cried Maria. “She has not yet left her room. But she will come to you as soon as she can. Oh! how she will thank me for my good news!”

And she hurried off to convey it, while Standish descended the magnificent staircase, and proceeded to the banqueting-hall.

One or two persons were to be seen in this vast apartment, which used formerly to be thronged with serving-men and guests. These were Randal Fermor and another servant who were spreading a cloth at the upper end of the long oak table.

“It has occurred to me that your honour may like to breakfast with your friends,” said Randal. “Shall I arrange it so?”

“By all means,” replied Standish.

So great was his impatience to behold Engracia that he thought it an age before she appeared with Maria, though in reality not many minutes had flown.

It was a rapturous meeting, for the frank-hearted Spanish damsel did not attempt to conceal her delight, and her lover could

not repress his ardour. As he held her hand, and gazed into her splendid black eyes, he thought her looking more beautiful than ever, and told her so with a warmth that left no doubt of his sincerity.

Their first transports over, they proceeded to the further end of the hall, where their discourse would be unheard, for he had much to say to her.

In the first place, he had to assure the lovely mistress of his heart that his devotion was unaltered, and, if possible, stronger than ever, while she declared that he had never for a single moment been absent from her thoughts.

“I have had nothing else to do but think of you, caro,” she said, “and pray that you would soon come to me. I have thought of you at all times, and in all places, but especially on the lake. Our separation has been so long, that I some-

times began to fear I should never behold you again—and that fear almost broke my heart. But at last you are come. I behold you again, and nothing can equal my bliss. Promise not to leave me, or I shall become miserable again.”

“I will not deceive you, my beloved!” cried Standish. “Nothing would give me so much delight as to stay with you—nothing will pain me more than to quit you. But I am not my own master. I should not have left Lathom House—I should not have deserted the countess, had she not sent me on a special mission. I have come here to meet the Earl of Derby.”

“Then it is not to see me that you have come—as I fondly persuaded myself?” she cried, somewhat piqued.

“Duty has the first claim upon me,

dearest," he rejoined. "I must obey her call."

"Yes, I have no right to complain. But it will be very—very hard to lose you." Then controlling her emotion, she added, "When do you expect the Earl of Derby?"

"I know not," he rejoined. "He may arrive at any moment. No doubt he will come secretly."

"And take you with him when he does come."

"It may be so. I cannot tell. It is not likely I shall remain here."

"Then you give me no hope?"

"Alas! no. My own idea is that his lordship has some important task for me to execute, and that I must set about it forthwith."

Their discourse was here interrupted by

Don Fortunio, who had entered the hall unnoticed by either of them, and now coughed slightly to announce his presence. He expressed the greatest pleasure at beholding Standish, and inquired anxiously after the countess, and how the siege progressed.

“I hope she still defies her enemies,” he said.

“Resolutely as ever,” replied Standish. “They have not relaxed in their efforts, but all those engaged in its defence believe that Lathom House will never be taken.”

“I joy to hear you say so,” cried Don Fortunio.

“The Earl of Derby will speedily raise the siege—of that you may feel certain,” remarked Standish. “The countess has endured much, but I trust the worst is over.”

“Her losses, I am told, have been slight

compared with those of the enemy?" observed Don Fortunio.

"True," replied Standish. "But we have just had one loss that has afflicted the whole garrison. Gertrude Rosworm has been killed."

"What do I hear?" cried Engracia. "Gertrude Rosworm killed! But I wonder not. She ever exposed herself to danger."

"Her end was heroic. She saved the countess from an assassin," said Standish.

"Truly, that was an heroic death," exclaimed Don Fortunio.

XXXI.

HOW THE JEWELS WERE SOLD TO SIMON OPHIR, THE
LIVERPOOL JEW.

BREAKFAST was finished, but the little party were still seated at the table, when Randal, who had attended upon them during the meal, suddenly disappeared, but returned in a few minutes, and signified to Standish that he had something to say to him in private.

Upon this, the young man arose, and bowing to his friends, followed the steward out of the hall.

“Be pleased to come with me to my lord’s cabinet,” said Randal, leading the way in that direction.

“Wherefore thither?” demanded Standish, struck by his manner. “Do you expect his lordship? Is he here?”

The steward, however, made no reply, but on reaching the cabinet, opened the door, and admitted him.

Two persons were in the chamber.

One of them was the Earl of Derby himself. He had evidently ridden far, and had just dismounted, having hastily taken off his mantle, and thrown his feathered hat on the table. He looked somewhat haggard, and scarcely greeted Standish as he entered the chamber.

With him was an elderly personage, who from his aspect might have been taken for a Puritan. His features were sharp and intelligent, and his eyes keen. He was

enveloped in a loose gown fastened at the neck, that concealed the rest of his costume, and had not removed his steeple-crowned hat.

Beside him on the table were two large leather bags, which Standish felt sure contained money. The earl did not mention the name of this personage, and treated him with great hauteur.

“Have you brought the jewels with you?” was the earl’s first inquiry of Standish.

“I have, my lord,” he replied, producing the cases.

Lord Derby handed them to the stranger, whose keen eyes glistened as he carefully inspected their contents.

The examination took some time, during which not a word was spoken, but the earl and Standish exchanged significant glances. The young man had seen an Israelite

money lender in Liverpool, named Simon Ophir, who had grown rich by the necessities of Cavaliers. He suspected this to be the person, and he was right in his surmise.

“Are you satisfied?” said the earl, when the usurer had finished his inspection.

“Yes, they are fine jewels, no doubt,” replied Ophir. “But if I give three thousand pounds for them, I shall gain very little by the transaction.”

“I will abate nothing,” rejoined the earl, haughtily. “I believe the jewels to be worth double the sum I have asked. You know full well that if I did not want the money for an especial purpose I would not part with them.”

“Yes, I am aware of that,” replied Ophir, “and I have so much respect for your lordship that I would strain a point to serve you. Though, from prudential

reasons, I maintain the exterior of a Puritan, I am a Royalist at heart, and my sympathies are entirely with your party. I only lend money to Cavaliers, and always to those of good family."

"Yes, I am aware of it. Sir Thomas Tyldesley has had a thousand pounds from you," observed the earl. "'Twas he recommended you to me."

"Sir Thomas is not the only one of your lordship's friends I have served," remarked Ophir. "Lord Molineux and Sir Gilbert Hoghton could tell you something if they chose."

"I do not want to hear it," said the earl. "They would have had no dealings with you, if they could have helped it. Neither would I."

"Your lordship is mistaken in me," rejoined Ophir. "I desire to deal honourably and fairly with you. I have come to

Knowsley at your request, and have brought with me three thousand pounds in gold, wherewith to purchase certain diamonds, which your lordship values at double the sum, but which I feel sure will leave me small profit—if not entail loss. However, a bargain is a bargain, and I am content. You will find the exact amount in those bags.”

“Take not his word, my lord,” interposed Standish. “Let the money be counted. I am willing to undertake the task.”

“I can make no objection,” said the money-lender. “But if the sum be not correct, I will forfeit double the amount.”

“Trust him not, I repeat, my lord,” cried Standish. “Such fellows are not to be believed on oath.”

“Count it, then—count it!” cried Ophir, angrily.

“I will,” replied Standish.

And untying the neck of one of the bags, he emptied half its glittering contents on the table.

“I leave the matter in your hands, Frank,” said the earl, rising. “I will send Randal Fermor to help you.”

With this, he quitted the cabinet, and proceeded to the great hall, where he found Don Fortunio and Engracia. His appearance did not cause them surprise, as they had been prepared for his arrival by Standish, but they were greatly pleased to see him.

Don Fortunio did not venture to make any inquiries which the earl might have been indisposed to answer, but he obtained the satisfactory assurance that Lathom House would soon be delivered from its assailants.

After some little time spent in con-

verse, they walked out into the garden, as the earl was anxious to see how it looked, but they had not got beyond the terrace, when they were joined by Standish.

“Is the affair settled?” inquired the earl.

The young man replied in the affirmative, and added in a low tone to his lordship :

“The money was perfectly right, so I did the rascal an injustice. He has departed with his treasures, and I frightened him by saying he would certainly be robbed before he got to Liverpool.”

“You did wrong, Frank,” said the earl. “Should his fears be realised, he will think you hired the robbers.”

“Nay, for that matter, I feel half inclined to turn robber myself,” laughed Standish.

“You will be otherwise employed,” said

the earl. "You must accompany me to Chester. I shall set out in an hour."

"So soon, my lord?" cried the young man, gazing wistfully at Engracia.

"I have done all I came to do, and shall return without delay," said the earl. "Where is Randal Fermor?"

"You will find him in your cabinet, my lord," replied Standish. "I left him in charge of the money."

The earl then re-entered the house, and proceeded to his cabinet, where he found the steward, who showed him the bags of money, and received his orders respecting them. They were to be carried by two of the troopers who had come with his lordship from Chester.

The hour had flown with inconceivable quickness as it seemed to Engracia and her lover, allowing scarce time enough, they thought, for a tender parting.

But the earl, who had bidden adieu to Don Fortunio, was in the saddle. His little troop was ready. Linacre, also, was ready, and holding Standish's steed by the bridle.

One last embrace and away!

End of the Fifth Book.

Book the Sixth.

PRINCE RUPERT.

I.

OF THE ROYALIST FORCE UNDER PRINCE RUPERT.

LORD DERBY and his attendants having made their way safely to Cuerdley, crossed the Mersey at Penketh Ferry, and rode on to Daresbury, where the earl learnt to his great satisfaction that Prince Rupert had entered Cheshire, and was marching with an army of ten thousand men, chiefly cavalry, from Betley, where he made a short halt, towards Haslington and Sandbach.

Report added that the inhabitants of

Nantwich, most of whom were friendly to the Parliament, had been thrown into the greatest consternation, as they expected the town would be assaulted by the prince, but he appeared to have other designs. The Royalist troops, however, were plundering the whole district, seizing all the horses they could find, and forcing great numbers of the peasantry to join them.

On receiving this intelligence, Lord Derby at once altered his plan, and instead of proceeding to Chester, struck across the country towards Knutsford, resting for the night at Nether Peover.

Next morning, he ascertained that the prince was advancing with his whole force to Knutsford, and rode on to meet him.

Ere long abundant evidences were afforded that a large army was on the march. Most of the farm-houses were deserted, and the country folk were flying in all directions,

fearful of being compelled to serve as recruits.

At length the advanced guard of the Royal army came in sight. It consisted of five hundred lancers, and a like number of cuirassiers, all well mounted and completely armed—the foremost being furnished with steel caps, gorgets, and breast-plates, and the latter with polished cuirasses, that glittered in the sun. Then followed several regiments of harquebussiers and dragoons. These did not make quite such a brilliant show as the troops that had gone before them, but were quite as serviceable in the field—if not more so. The artillery consisted of twenty large cannons, each drawn by four strong horses. These pieces of ordnance had just been used at Newark.

The infantry, which we have said was not so numerous as the horse, comprised six regiments, each five hundred strong, and

besides there were a thousand pikemen and billmen.

Viewed from the brow of a hill, as Lord Derby first beheld it, with its flags flying, and its numerous richly accoutred officers riding with their men, this large army presented a splendid sight, well calculated to fill the earl with martial enthusiasm. Equal ardour was kindled in Standish's breast, and he longed to join the force, which appeared to him resistless.

Having gazed at the spectacle for a few minutes and listened to the stirring strains that added so materially to its effect, the earl rode down the hill, and galloped past the lancers and cuirassiers till he met the prince, with whom were several officers of distinction. Most of them were fine-looking men, but not to compare with their valiant leader.

As usual Prince Rupert was magnificently

accoutred, and bestrode a powerful charger. Elated by his recent successes, confident in his ability to subdue the foe on any future engagement, and burning for revenge, he looked full of spirit, though even when thus excited, his countenance had a stern expression, and when he spoke his eyes seemed occasionally to flash fire.

The prince was much surprised to behold the Earl of Derby, as he had not expected to meet him on the march, but he greeted him most cordially.

No halt was made. The officers who were with the prince when Lord Derby came up fell back, and left them together.

They then rode side by side, and were soon engaged in earnest discourse, which was conducted in a low tone.

Rupert's expression became fiercer, and his eye blazed as he listened to what the earl said to him.

Notwithstanding the representations made to him, it seemed that the prince had not exactly comprehended the condition of the countess at Lathom House, nor was he aware of the indignities to which she had been subjected. But when Lord Derby explained what had really occurred during the siege, he was exceedingly wroth.

“I had no idea my cousin, the countess, had been so much distressed by these insolent rebels,” he said; “but I promise you she shall be speedily delivered from them. I will do nothing till I have succoured her, and avenged her on her malicious enemies.”

“I thank your highness for these promises which I am sure will be fulfilled,” replied the earl. “Had my noble wife been able to contend with her enemies she would not have asked for assistance. But she fears that the garrison may be reduced by famine.”

“That shall never be,” cried Prince Rupert. “In a few days I shall be before the castle, and we shall then see how long the siege will endure.”

“Again I thank your highness in my wife’s name and my own,” said the earl. “Had I not lost all my men before I retired to the Isle of Man, it would not have been needful for me to apply to you for aid. But your soldiers shall be well rewarded for the service they will render me. I have brought three thousand pounds in gold with me, which I will place in your highness’s hands to be distributed among them when the siege is raised.”

“By my faith! you have done well, cousin, and I thank you heartily,” cried Rupert. “My men want pay as you are well aware, and this will gratify them.”

“It is right your highness should know that the money is the produce of my wife’s

jewels," said the earl. "Your cousin, the countess, therefore, will reward the men."

"They shall know that," said the prince; "and they will then comprehend what sacrifices are made for the king. His majesty himself shall know it."

"After the siege is raised, I make no doubt I shall be able to bring his majesty large bodies of men," said the earl. "But in the present state of Lancashire, which is now entirely in the hands of the rebels, it is impossible to do so."

"All that shall speedily be changed," said Rupert. "I mean to storm Bolton and Wigan."

"I rejoice to hear it," said the earl. "With this force neither place will be able to withstand your assault. You mean to enter the county, I conclude, by Stockport Bridge?"

"Such is my design," replied the prince.

“The pass will be strongly defended,” observed the earl.

“I count upon that,” rejoined the prince. “But if they bring all the force they can muster from Manchester and elsewhere, they will not prevent my entrance. Your lordship must help me. You shall have the command of my cuirassiers.”

“I thank your highness,” replied the earl. “If we do not cut our way through all opposition, it shall not be my fault.”

Knutsford, then but a very small town, afforded poor quarters for so large a force. Tents were therefore pitched in Tatton Park, while Toft Hall, Booth’s Hall, Mere Hall, and several other habitations in the neighbourhood were occupied. The prince and the Earl of Derby, with some of the chief officers, found lodgings at Tabley Hall, the residence of Sir Peter Leicester. Sir Peter, who had suffered much for his loyalty,

gave them a hearty welcome, but his house had been recently plundered by the Parliamentary soldiers.

On arriving at Tabley Hall, Lord Derby's first business was to deliver to the prince the sum of money he had promised him. Rupert smiled as the bags of gold were placed before him by Standish, and after he had transferred them with some private instructions to his paymaster, he said :

“Lord Derby informs me, Captain Standish, that you are about to return to Lathom House, and hope to gain an entrance, in spite of the besiegers. Should you succeed in doing so, tell the countess to be of good cheer. I shall shortly come to her succour.”

“Your highness may be sure that no message could give her ladyship greater satisfaction,” replied Standish, “and I hope

soon to deliver it. If fortune favours me, I shall see her ladyship to-morrow morn."

"Good," rejoined Rupert, approvingly. "Are you alone?"

"I have one attendant with me, your highness."

"You can depend upon him?" said the prince.

"He brought me safely through the trenches, your highness, so I think he will take me back."

"The man may be trusted," observed the earl. "He conveyed a letter to the countess from Chester. I shall not write to her now. Your highness's message will suffice. When she learns that relief is at hand, she will be perfectly content."

II.

HOW STANDISH RETURNED TO LATHOM HOUSE, BUT STAYED
TO SUP AT KNOWSLEY ON THE WAY THITHER.

EVENING was coming on, when Standish, attended by Linacre, set out from Tabley Hall.

On his way to Daresbury, whither he speeded, he encountered several foraging parties, but as they belonged to Prince Rupert's army, they did not molest him.

From Daresbury he galloped on to the ferry that had served his turn in the morning, crossed the Mersey to Penketh, and

went on at the same rapid pace to Prescott. His intention was to halt at Knowsley, and he hoped to reach the house before its inmates had retired to rest.

He succeeded in his design, and astonished Don Fortunio and Engracia by his unexpected appearance in the great banquetting-hall. Engracia uttered a cry when she beheld him.

“Is it possible you can have returned so soon?” she said. “You gave us no hopes of seeing you again.”

“I had no expectation of returning immediately when I left you,” he replied. “But I have tidings that will delight you. Prince Rupert is coming with a large force to the countess’s relief. I have seen him, and am on the way to Lathom with a message from his highness.”

And he hastily recounted all that had occurred. They listened with the greatest

satisfaction to his narration, and so did Randal Fermor, who was present at the time.

“You must be fatigued by your long ride, sir,” said the old steward, filling a goblet with wine, and presenting it to him.

“Touch the cup with your lips ere I drink, I pray you, fair damsel,” said Standish.

She complied, exclaiming at the same time: “To the countess’s speedy deliverance.”

While Standish emptied the goblet, Don Fortunio likewise drank the same toast, and as it was now quite evident that the young man stood in need of some refreshment, the steward pressed him to sit down at the table, at the same time placing part of a cold fowl before him.

To bear him company, Don Fortunio, who had finished supper, began again, and

even Engracia ate a little more. But while thus taking care of himself he was not unmindful of his attendant, but sent Randal to look after Linacre and the horses.

Having rested sufficiently, and renovated his strength by a good supper, Standish took leave of his friends, and again set forth on his perilous journey.

The night was dark, but he rode swiftly through the park with his attendant, crossed the moors safely, and entered the wood beyond which lay the camp of the enemy. Here he halted for awhile to consult with his attendant.

The greatest caution was now required. Linacre thought they might be able to steal through the camp unperceived, but if the alarm should be given, they must trust to the swiftness of their horses.

At length, they issued from the wood, peering through the gloom, and listening

anxiously for any sound, but they had not proceeded far when they were challenged by a sentinel whom they had not been able to distinguish in the gloom.

As they made no answer the man fired, upon which they dashed on, determined at all hazards to pass through the camp. But the alarm had been given, drums were beaten, and several more shots fired.

Linacre displayed great skill in avoiding the danger. At his earnest request he was allowed to take the lead, and it was well that Standish consented to his guidance, as by the various turns he made, he completely perplexed the enemy, and caused them to fire upon one another.

At last, Standish and his attendant cleared the camp, and without hurt or hindrance to themselves or their steeds, but other sentinels had to be passed. They freed themselves from the first who

challenged them by shooting him, and then galloped towards the trenches. They were next pursued by a mounted guard, who shouted to them to stop, and fired at them when they refused, and the pursuit continued till they reached the fortifications.

Meanwhile, the firing had been heard by the musketeers on the ramparts, and suspecting what was taking place, Captain Chisenhale, who had a party of men in readiness, instantly sallied forth from the postern-gate, and fired a volley at the nearest battery.

This was done to distract the enemy's attention, and proved completely successful, while it served to direct Standish and his attendant in their course, and they now made for that part of the trenches which was nearest the gateway.

But their pursuers were not far behind, and shouted to their comrades to

stop them, but the cries were unheard. The fugitives got through the trenches, killing three men who sought to check them, and though pursued to the last, crossed the drawbridge in safety, and entered the gateway.

“Has the countess retired to rest?” asked Standish, as he rode into the court.

“Her ladyship is in the chapel,” replied Captain Ogle, to whom the inquiry was addressed. “She has ordered a special service to-night.”

“Come with me thither,” cried Standish, leaping from his steed. “I have news you will be glad to hear.”

When they reached the chapel, the service was just finished, and the soldiers who had attended it were coming forth.

Standish ordered them to wait outside, and entering the little fane, met the countess and Archdeacon Rutter.

She was greatly surprised, but had not time to question him, ere he spoke.

“I bring a message to your ladyship from Prince Rupert,” he said. “His highness is coming to succour you. You may expect him ere many days.”

“Heaven, then, has heard my prayers,” she exclaimed.

III. }

HOW STOCKPORT BRIDGE WAS DEFENDED BY COLONELS
DUCKENFIELD AND MAINWARING, AND HOW IT WAS TAKEN
BY PRINCE RUPERT AND THE EARL OF DERBY.

THE tidings brought by Standish that Prince Rupert and the Earl of Derby were marching to succour the countess quickly spread through the garrison, and caused so much excitement, that the musketeers were with difficulty prevented from shouting out to the enemy.

The countess, however, gave the strictest orders that no manifestation whatever

should be made, and her injunctions were enforced by Major Farrington and the officers.

Standish had explained to her ladyship that the prince and the earl meant to enter Lancashire by Stockport Bridge, which was certain to be defended by a strong force of the enemy, and that till this pass was won, she must not reckon upon the immediate appearance of her deliverers.

'The well-judging lady was of the same opinion, and though she had no apprehension of the result of the conflict which she felt must ensue at Stockport, she would not allow any precautions to be neglected.

"On the contrary we must be more vigilant than ever," she said, "lest the enemy should make a last attempt to assault the castle before they are forced to abandon the siege."

"My counsel is that we should make

another grand sortie," said Major Farrington, "and if we can, drive the enemy from the trenches, before our friends arrive, so that the honour may rest—as it should do—with your ladyship."

"I am quite satisfied with what I have done," she replied. "I do not desire to expose my brave soldiers and their officers to heedless risk."

"I beseech your ladyship not to think of us," observed Standish. "We all long to punish the enemy, and shall be grievously disappointed if we have not another opportunity of doing so. Besides, there is nothing to fear. In the numerous sorties we have made our losses have been trifling."

"That is true," replied the countess. "Heaven has fought with us. My brave soldiers shall not be deprived of the honour they covet. If the prince and my lord

arrive not here in three days, another sortie shall be made."

"Why should it not be made to-night, madam?" said Standish.

"No—that must not be," she replied. "Were any disaster to occur, my lord would blame me."

Standish said no more, though he felt mortified by her ladyship's refusal.

A strong sense of disappointment pervaded both officers and men that they were not to be allowed a last chance of punishing the detested foe, but they repressed the feeling as well as they could, and only displayed it by picking off a man now and then on the batteries.

A strange sort of quietude prevailed amongst the enemy, which could only be explained by the supposition that they were preparing either for a general assault or a speedy retreat. That news had reached

them of the advance of Prince Rupert and the earl was apparent, but how they meant to act under the circumstances could not be so readily conjectured.

The greatest care was taken by Rigby to cut off all communication between the garrison and their friends, and he succeeded so well that no intelligence, later than that brought by Standish, had as yet reached the countess.

She knew not whether Rupert and the earl had passed Stockport Bridge, or whether they had been compelled by the successful resistance of the enemy to cross the Mersey at Warrington. In the latter case they would have to storm the town, and this would occasion considerable delay.

Linacre and another scout had been sent out to obtain information, but neither had returned.

Meanwhile, though the garrison knew it

not, the utmost anxiety prevailed in the camp of the enemy, and constant councils were held by Rigby and Colonel Assheton, Colonel Holland having returned to Manchester on the first tidings of the prince's approach, as it was not improbable that town might be assaulted by the prince.

All the available force that could be got together by the Parliamentary commanders was sent to Stockport to defend the bridge. Unfortunately for them, Sir Thomas Fairfax, the only general who could have adequately directed their efforts at this critical juncture, or encountered the resistless Rupert with a chance of success, was in Yorkshire, and could not arrive in time.

The Parliamentary force, thus hastily collected, amounted to four thousand men—five hundred of whom were contributed by Rigby from his beleaguering force at Lathom. The commanders of this force,

which consisted chiefly of infantry, were Colonels Duckenfield and Mainwaring, two officers of courage and experience. They had with them a dozen large cannon.

At Stockport, the Mersey, which here divides Cheshire and Lancashire, runs through a deep ravine with high cliffs on either side. At that time the river was crossed by a narrow stone bridge, which from its position could be easily defended.

Posted on the Lancashire side of the river, the Parliamentary leaders had placed six of their cannon so as to command the bridge, and the rest on the heights above.

The cliffs were covered with musketeers who could fire upon the enemy as from the ramparts of a castle, while a large force, drawn up on both sides of the bridge, was ready to dispute the passage.

When Prince Rupert looked down upon this formidable pass, and saw how well it

was defended, he remarked to the Earl of Derby, who was with him :

“The rebels have done their best to keep us out of Lancashire. It will take some time and cost some men to get to the other side of this ravine, but we shall do it in spite of them.”

“Will your highness go first, or shall I clear the bridge?” asked the earl.

“No, cousin. No one shall go before me,” replied the prince. “Follow with the cuirassiers.”

Having given some orders, the valiant prince, who loved to confront danger, drew his sword, placed himself at the head of his lancers, and dashed down the precipitous bank like a torrent, sweeping all before it.

Utterly unable to withstand the furious onset, the soldiers who guarded the approach to the bridge were either cut to pieces, or driven back upon their comrades, so

that the bridge was crowded with soldiers, jammed so closely together that they could not move hand or foot.

In this helpless condition they were mercilessly slaughtered by the lancers, to escape whom numbers leaped over the parapets into the river and were drowned.

In a few minutes, Rupert was across the bridge, cutting down, or scattering the new force that vainly attempt to oppose him.

Meantime, the musketeers on the cliffs had begun to fire, and showers of bullets whistled past the prince, but he seemed to bear a charmed life, for not a shot struck him.

The cannon near the bridge proved useless, and were taken before the engineers could open fire, while the ordnance on the heights, being badly levelled, did more harm to friends than foes.

By this time the Earl of Derby had joined the prince, and harquebussiers and dragoons were following fast, so that the whole ravine seemed filled with soldiers, and resounded with the roar of cannon and the rattle of musketry.

To prevent the Royalists from climbing the bank, Colonel Duckenfield had barred the ascent with a thousand men, and a terrible conflict took place, but it ended in the complete rout of the Parliamentarians, more than half of whom were slain.

The battle did not last more than two hours, but at the end of that time Rupert and Lord Derby were in Lancashire, with their whole force—neither of them having received a wound, while the enemy were flying in all directions.

The losses of the Royalists were slight as

compared with those of the foe. Quantities of arms were taken, and many prisoners made.

In short, the prince's entrance into Lancashire had been marked by an important victory, tidings of which would quickly spread throughout the county, rousing the well-affected, and filling the rebels with dismay.

On hearing of this signal defeat, Rigby was filled with consternation. Clearly, the siege of Lathom House must be abandoned, since he could not doubt that Prince Rupert and the Earl of Derby would immediately come to succour the countess, and it would be impossible to stand against them.

He knew not which way to turn. If he retired to Manchester, he should inevitably meet the foe. After some consideration, he decided upon proceeding to Bolton, which

had now become a Puritan town, and where there was a strong Parliamentary garrison.

But he determined not to set out till night, as he wished to keep the countess in suspense to the last moment. With this object he ordered a certain number of men to remain in the trenches, and occupy the batteries till it became dark.

Later on in the day, the remnant of the troops he had sent to Stockport returned, in a very shattered condition, several of them wounded, and most of them without arms or ammunition.

Captain Willoughby and Captain Bootle, the only officers left, out of half a dozen, gave him particulars of the disastrous fight, and confirmed his apprehensions that the victorious Royalist commanders were marching to Lathom to wreak their vengeance upon him. He had no alternative, there-

fore, but flight, and he accordingly hastened his preparations for departure.

Before setting out, he sent Captain Bootle with a small troop of horse to Knowsley, ordering him to make prisoners of Don Fortunio and his daughter, and bring them to Bolton, as he hoped to obtain a large ransom for them.

An hour before midnight, he had assembled his whole force, which notwithstanding the losses he had just sustained amounted to nearly three thousand men.

In obedience to the orders given them, the soldiers had silently quitted the trenches and batteries, and nothing indicated that the musketeers on the batteries were aware of their departure.

Screened by the darkness, Rigby then stole away, deeply mortified and humiliated, the Leaguer that had lasted nearly four months being thus disgracefully abandoned.

All possible expedition was used in the nocturnal march, for the Parliamentarians were fearful of pursuit, knowing that quarter would not be given them, if they were overtaken.

They might have found refuge in Wigan, which was not far off, but Rigby did not dare to stay there, as he would not have been secure from the vengeful Earl of Derby. So he went on, leaving behind him at Ecclestone and Wrightington such of his wounded soldiers as were unable to continue the rapid march.

On reaching Lostock Hall, he halted for an hour, and then made his way over the hills and moors lying between him and Bolton, arriving there soon after day-break. Not till he was inside the mud walls that protected the town, did he feel secure.

IV.

OF THE BRIEF VISIT PAID BY PRINCE RUPERT TO THE
COUNTESS.

WHILE Rigby was executing this rapid retreat, the officers of the garrison were preparing for a final sortie—permission having at last been accorded, though reluctantly, by the countess.

Just before dawn, Standish, accompanied by Lieutenant Bretergh and fifty musketeers, sallied forth from the great gateway; and at the same time Captains Ogle and Rawsthorne with another party issued from the postern-gate. Captain Chisenhale with

a hundred men was in the centre court, and Captain Molineux Radcliffe was on the ramparts.

As the two parties cautiously advanced towards the trenches, they were surprised to find that all remained quiet. No sentinels could be discovered, nor was a single shot fired from the fortifications.

Beginning, at length, to suspect the truth, Standish dashed on, plunged unhesitatingly into the trench, which he found abandoned, and next scaled the nearest battery, followed closely by Bretergh and his men. No resistance was offered. Not a shot was fired. The cannon was in the sconce, but the engineers were gone.

Overjoyed at the discovery, Standish caused his men to shout loudly. They were answered from the fortifications gained by Ogle and Rawsthorne, and from musketeers on the ramparts of the man-

sion, but no other sound was heard, and it was clear that the besiegers had decamped, leaving nothing behind them except such ordnance as were too heavy to be removed.

Intelligence of this important discovery was immediately sent to Major Farrington, by whom it was conveyed to the countess.

She was quite prepared for the good news by the shouts she had heard. Indeed, there was not a single person in the garrison that did not guess the truth.

As soon as it became light, the sudden departure of the enemy was confirmed, since it could be seen that the tents had been struck during the night. Evidently Rigby had taken flight, alarmed by the approach of Prince Rupert and the Earl of Derby.

Standish besought permission to ride forth and meet the earl, and the countess yielded to his solicitations, but enjoined him to take a guard with him. Nothing could have pleased him better, and as soon as the horses could be saddled, he set out with half a dozen armed attendants.

Passing through the deserted trenches, and making his way past the fortifications, he rode on to the site of the camp. There were abundant vestiges of the besiegers, though they had taken with them all they could. Several wounded men, who had been left behind, were lying stretched on the ground, groaning with pain. Some of these poor fellows implored his help, and from them he ascertained that Colonel Rigby had retired with his whole force to Bolton. They also informed him of the conflict at Stockport, adding, that the victorious Royalists

were marching to Lathom, and could not be very far off.

This proved to be the case, for ere he had quitted the spot, the loud blast of a clarion was heard, and a regiment of lancers emerged from the wood. At the head of this fine body of men rode Prince Rupert and the Earl of Derby. Having learnt from their scouts that the beleaguering force was gone, they had ridden on with the advanced guard.

Instantly recognising the two noble personages, Standish rode on to meet them.

“Soh! the siege is raised, and Rigby gone,” cried the prince, as he returned Standish’s salutation. “Whither has he fled?”

“To Bolton, your highness, as I learn from those wounded men,” replied Standish.

“To Bolton!” cried Rupert. Then turn-

ing to Lord Derby, he added: "We will follow him hither."

The earl signified his satisfaction at the resolve.

"Were he to escape punishment, all the rebels in the county would deride us," he said. "Bolton is a strong place, as I have found, but it shall not shelter him from our swords."

"We will march there at once," cried the prince. "I will come to Lathom on our return."

"Nay, I pray your highness, pass not by the castle, now you are so near it," said the earl. "It will cheer the countess to see you."

Thus urged, Rupert could not refuse, though he controlled his impatience with difficulty. But he gave orders to an aide-de-camp to inform the different officers that no halt should be made, but that the whole

army must march on to Bolton, adding that he and Lord Derby would overtake them before they got half way there.

These orders given, the prince and the earl, attended by Standish and followed by a guard of twenty lancers, together with the musketeers from the garrison, rode towards the mansion.

On reaching the batteries, they stopped for a few minutes to examine them, and while they were engaged in the scrutiny, Standish told them of the many successful sorties made by the garrison, and how the great mortar had been captured.

“Rigby has utterly failed,” he said. “He has battered the walls, knocked down a turret, and hit the Eagle Tower, but he has done us no real harm.”

“How many soldiers have you lost?” demanded the prince.

“Not half a dozen, your highness,” re-

plied Standish. "But upwards of five hundred of the enemy have been slain."

Rupert smiled at the earl, but made no remark.

Meanwhile, access had been given to the castle through a breach in the fortifications, and a portion of the ditch had likewise been levelled.

The drawbridge was lowered, and the gates thrown wide open, and as the prince and the earl rode into the court-yard, which resounded with the loud and joyous shouts of the musketeers, they were met by Major Farrington and the officers of the garrison.

But Lord Derby did not linger there. The countess and her daughters had just come forth, and on beholding them he sprang from his steed, and hurrying forward clasped them in his arms.

Not to interrupt this joyous meeting,

the prince remained for a few minutes in converse with Major Farrington. He then dismounted, and tendered his homage and congratulations to the countess, and in no measured terms.

“I am no flatterer as you are well aware, cousin,” he said, “but a rude soldier, and you will therefore believe me when I say that I do not think there is another woman in England—nay, for that matter, not a man—who could have defended this castle for so long a period against such a beleaguering force, as you have done. I am proud of you, cousin—very proud—and well I may be of my near relationship to the most heroic lady of her day.”

“You praise me overmuch, cousin,” replied the countess, much gratified. “But I thank you nevertheless.”

“If you are proud of her, prince, what must I be, who can call her wife?” said

Lord Derby. "Had I not known her intrepidity and skill I should not have left her here. But she has more than justified my confidence."

"Without your positive orders, my dear lord, I would never have capitulated, and this I told the messengers sent me by the enemy," said the countess. "And had not you, prince, come to my deliverance, I would have perished here with my children and soldiers. Such was my fixed determination. I thank you from my heart for what you have done."

"Nay, I have done nothing," rejoined Rupert. "It has not been needful to strike a blow. The enemy have fled."

"The terror of your name has driven them hence," said the countess.

"But they are not beyond my reach," said the prince, sternly. "They have fled, but I shall catch them. I have sworn to avenge

your wrongs, cousin, and I will keep my word. I will exterminate Rigby and his host."

"Rigby does not deserve mercy," said the countess. "He is a traitor and a robber. Whither is he gone?"

"To Bolton," replied the earl. "There we shall follow him, so we must now bid you adieu."

"This is indeed a brief visit," she said.

"But we shall speedily return," said the earl.

"Will not your highness enter the house, and drink a cup of wine?" said the countess.

"I will drink no wine till I have taken Bolton, and slain Rigby," rejoined Rupert. "Ere many days, you shall see us again, if all goes well. And then I will feast with you, and rejoice. Farewell, dear cousin!"

While the prince mounted his charger,

and rode slowly through the gateway bowing to Major Farrington, and the officers, Lord Derby lingered for a moment to embrace his wife and daughters, and shook hands heartily with Archdeacon Rutter and the other chaplains.

He then vaulted into the saddle, and followed the prince amid reiterated shouts from the musketeers.

Gladly would they have accompanied their lord to Bolton. Gladly would the officers have gone with him. But the earl had sufficient force, and would not reduce the strength of the garrison till the enemy was vanquished.

All therefore were left behind except Standish and his little troop, who had the enviable privilege of attending their lord.

As the earl looked back at the castle, and thought of all that had happened since

he last beheld it, he breathed a prayer to Heaven for its marvellous preservation.

Just as Standish had passed through the breach in the fortifications, he encountered Linacre, and stopped for a moment to speak to him.

“What news from Knowsley?” he asked.

“Bad news,” replied Linacre. “Don Fortunio and his daughter have been taken prisoners by Captain Bootle, and carried off to Bolton. They were taken away last night.”

Fain would Standish have questioned him further, but time was not allowed him.

At this moment, the two leaders set off at a rapid pace, and he was obliged to follow.

End of Book the Sixth.

Book the Seventh.



THE STORMING OF BOLTON.

I.

HOW BOLTON WAS ASSAULTED; AND HOW THE ATTACK WAS
REPULSED.

PRINCE RUPERT and the earl overtook the army before it had proceeded many miles.

A brief halt was made at Haigh, and Standish then informed Lord Derby, with whom he had had no previous opportunity of conferring, that Don Fortunio and his daughter had been carried off from Knowsley by Captain Bootle.

This intelligence filled the earl with rage,

and he exclaimed that if he caught Bootle, he should be put to death as a felon.

From Haigh they marched on to Heaton, where they again halted, and being now about two miles from Bolton, several mounted scouts were sent across the moor to ascertain how the town could be most advantageously approached.

Wishing to observe the movements of the enemy, Standish rode out at the same time as the scouts, and mounted a little eminence, whence he obtained a complete view of the town, here about half a mile distant.

The defences he knew had been planned by Rosworm, and were skilfully made. Strong mud walls, having a deep ditch outside, surrounded the town; the entrances being protected by barricades with stout posts and chains. As far as he could discover after a careful survey, there were

only two gates, and both were strongly guarded.

From previous experience in Manchester, he knew that these barricades would effectually resist cavalry. The walls therefore must be first gained, and this would be no easy task, for they were thronged with musketeers, and provided with several large pieces of ordnance.

But Standish cared not for difficulty or danger, and thought only of liberating Engracia from her captors.

Floating from the walls were a great number of flags which he had last seen on the batteries menacing Lathom House. These should soon be torn down, and sent to the countess.

Before quitting his post of observation he took a final survey of the town, and was obliged to confess that it was likely to make an obstinate resistance.

The place was not large, but the garrison was very strong, and unless he was much mistaken, Rosworm was there in person. Nothing seemed neglected—nor could he detect a weak point in the defences. With the firm conviction that the assault would be hazardous, though burning to engage in it, he rode back.

Two of the scouts had already preceded him, and declared that it mattered little where the attack was made, as the whole garrison was evidently prepared.

On hearing Standish's report, Prince Rupert would not wait a moment longer, but commanded a simultaneous attack to be made on the walls and gates.

The trumpets then sounded, and the army, which had hitherto looked like a vast compact mass, divided into different companies, some moving to the right, and

others to the left, but all with great rapidity.

Before each gate was a squadron of horse eager to dash in as soon as an entrance could be forced, and discharging their arquebusses and calivers at the guard, who, screened by the barricades, were keeping up a continuous and destructive fire against them.

Outside the entire circuit of the fortifications, which was not of very great extent, and scarcely exceeded a mile and a half, were collected companies of infantry, who were endeavouring to cross the ditch and scale the walls at various points, but were checked in their efforts by the obstinate resistance offered by the defenders.

In every instance where the assailants had succeeded in obtaining a footing they were killed, or hurled back again into the ditch.

But though repulsed, they constantly returned to the attack, and desperate fighting, attended by great slaughter, went on ceaselessly along the walls.

Furious at the unexpected resistance offered by the Parliamentarians, of whose bravery he had formed a very contemptible opinion, Prince Rupert galloped round the walls, and shouted to his men to renew the assault. His orders were reiterated by the officers, but despite every effort, no substantial advantage was gained.

The besieged had lost very few of their number, while the Royalists had suffered severely, and stimulated by success, the former performed prodigies of valour.

Several Cavaliers of distinction were killed, greatly to Rupert's vexation, and the loss of his friends, slaughtered before his eyes on the walls, exasperated him to the highest degree.

The Earl of Derby was quite as much incensed as the prince at the check they had sustained, for he would not acknowledge a defeat, even to himself. He had expected an easy victory, and a repulse by Rigby mortified as well as exasperated him.

Even Standish had met with a reverse.

Though he had received no orders to make the attempt he was so galled by what he witnessed, that he sprang from his steed, and calling to his men to bring a scaling ladder, gained the summit of the walls, only to remain there for a minute. He was then pushed back by a pikeman, luckily without receiving a wound.

Half an hour later a retreat was sounded, and Rupert and the earl retired, slowly and in good order, evidently intending to renew the attack.

No attempt was made to cut off their

retreat, for the Parliamentarians were too prudent to quit their stronghold. Had they sallied forth, the Royalists would have instantly driven them back, and entered the gates with them.

When they were beyond the reach of the cannon, the prince and the earl held a council of war, at which the principal officers assisted, and it was considered how an entrance could be found for cavalry, Rupert, whose wrath was undiminished, declaring he was resolved to take the town, and give quarter to none within it.

II.

HOW STEPHEN MARSH OFFERED TO TAKE TWO HUNDRED MUSKETEERS INTO THE TOWN.

AT this juncture, a man, guarded by a couple of musketeers, was brought in by an officer.

The officer explained that the prisoner stated he had just come secretly from the town, as no doubt was the fact, and, moreover, asserted that he could render the prince a most important service, but would not do so except for a large reward.

“How art thou named, fellow, and what

service canst thou render?" demanded Rupert.

"My name is Stephen Marsh," replied the man. "I dwell in Bolton, and can take your highness into the town—but I must be well rewarded for doing so."

"Ha! say'st thou so?" cried the prince. "Make good thy words, and doubt not thy reward."

"I must have it now," replied Marsh.

"Will not my word suffice?" observed the prince.

"I would rather have the money," rejoined Marsh, bluntly.

"Give him two hundred pounds," said Rupert, to one of his officers. "Will that content thee?"

"Ay, marry," replied Marsh. "I will engage to bring into the town, through a place called the Private Acres, as many

musketeers as there are pieces of gold in this bag."

"Canst thou not convey horsemen as well as foot?" demanded the prince.

"Impossible, your highness," replied Marsh. "Once inside, the musketeers can admit their comrades. They will be near the Bradshaw Gate."

"Ay, if that gate be opened for us, the crow's nest will be soon destroyed," said the prince. "What think you of this, my lord?" he added to the earl.

"The plan cannot fail, if treachery be not intended," rejoined Lord Derby.

"The musketeers will have me with them," said Marsh.

"Let me have the command of the party, I pray your highness," said Standish, "and I will answer for the rest."

"Have I your highness's permission to

lead the van in this new assault?" cried the earl, eagerly. "You could not accord me a greater favour."

"Then be it so," replied Rupert. "Go in, and spare not. No quarter must be given."

"I am not in a mood for pity," said the earl, sternly.

"No quarter given!" cried Marsh. "I repent me of the bargain I have made. Take back the money."

"'Tis too late now," said Standish. "Thy compact must be fulfilled. Guide me forthwith to the Private Acres."

Then turning to the earl, he added: "Your lordship shall not have to wait long for admittance at the Bradshaw Gate."

Putting himself at the head of a company of musketeers, and keeping Marsh beside him, Standish then proceeded cautiously towards the town.

III.

WHAT PASSED BETWEEN COLONEL RIGBY AND ROSWORM.

RIGBY and his officers were greatly elated by their successful defence of the town. But they scarcely liked to acknowledge how much they owed to the skill of the great German engineer.

Rosworm had not taken an active part of the defence, but had explained his plans to Rigby, by whom they were carried out, with the result just described.

But though Rupert and Lord Derby had been repulsed, Rosworm felt certain

the assault would be renewed, and with additional vigour, and he warned Rigby not to be too confident, since he had terrible foes to deal with, who were bent upon vengeance, and would not depart without it.

Rigby paid little heed to the counsel, for he now felt sure he could hold out till assistance arrived from Wigan, Blackburn, Manchester, and other places.

“Before to-morrow, I shall be reinforced by ten thousand men,” he said.

“But before to-morrow, the town may be taken,” rejoined Rosworm.

“I am not uneasy,” said Rigby. “After the reception given them I do not think the prince and Lord Derby will venture to make another assault. But should they do so, we shall repulse them again.”

“Keep out the cavalry and you are safe,”

said Rosworm. "But should they once enter, the town is lost."

"You have fortified the place so well that it is impregnable," said Rigby.

"There is but one weak spot, and that the enemy will never discover," said Rosworm.

"Ha! where is it?" inquired Rigby, somewhat uneasily. "I have not found it out myself. I thought the walls were perfect. I have been round them several times, and could detect nothing wrong."

"The walls are quite secure, but there is a subterranean passage under the ditch that may be used as a sally-port," replied Rosworm. "It leads to a place called the Private Acres."

"Where is the entrance to this subterranean passage?" asked Rigby.

"In the cellar of a house belonging to

one Stephen Marsh," replied Rosworm. "The man is well affected towards the Parliament."

"May be so," said Rigby. "But the habitation ought to be guarded. I will give orders to that effect, but I must first go to the church, where two worthy ministers, Master John Harper, Pastor of Bolton, and Master John Fogg, Pastor of Liverpool, are offering up prayers."

"I will cause a guard to be placed there myself, since you deem it needful," said Rosworm. "But I desire to say a word to you respecting the prisoners who have been brought here from Knowsley by Captain Bootle. Do you intend to detain them?"

"Ay, till they are ransomed," replied Rigby. "But I cannot bestow a thought upon them now."

"Do you know where they are?"

“Not exactly,” replied Rigby. “I directed Bootle to provide them with a lodging, and he told me he had done so. As I have just said, I have not had time to think of them.”

“They are lodged in the very house we have just been speaking of—Stephen Marsh’s,” — said Rosworm. “The young damsel was greatly terrified by the assault, and offered me some jewels if I would deliver her and her father, and their Spanish servant. But I could not comply without consulting you. Will you take these jewels as a ransom, and let them go? They can depart by this subterranean passage.”

“Are they aware of the outlet?” asked Rigby.

“No ; neither is Captain Bootle,” replied Rosworm.

“I will give the matter consideration,”

said Rigby. "The prisoners are best here for the present."

"But we may have another assault."

"If so, they shall be removed to a safer place. When I have been to church—if nothing happens to prevent me—I will go to Marsh's house."

"You will find me there," replied Rosworm.

They then separated.

Their discourse had taken place in the inner room of a large inn situated in the market-place, the other rooms of the house being filled with soldiers, who were refreshing themselves after their active service on the walls.

In the market-place itself, some five or six hundred pikemen and clubmen were collected, numbers of whom were listening to a preacher in a grey cloak, stationed at the foot of the old stone cross, who was con-

gratulating them on the glorious victory they had achieved.

Alas! how soon was the scene changed. That place now filled with stalwart men was speedily to be choked up with the dead and dying.

The tone of the preacher at the cross in the market-place was full of exultation.

“They compassed us about,” he said, “but they have not prevailed against us. The Lord of Hosts was with us, and fought for us, and if they return, he will help us to smite them again.”

Little did he dream that in the next assault, he himself would be smitten.

IV.

HOW ENGRACIA AND HER FATHER ESCAPED BY THE
SUBTERRANEAN PASSAGE.

IN the upper room of a house, scarcely more than fifty yards from the mud walls surrounding the town, was a beautiful young damsel, whose attire and features showed she belonged to a different clime. She was kneeling in prayer, with a small crucifix clasped in her hands, on which her eyes were fixed.

Close beside her was another kneeling figure—a woman somewhat older than her-

self, and of inferior degree, but not without pretensions to good looks.

Both were very earnest in their supplications to the Blessed Virgin to deliver them from the hands into which they had fallen, and when they arose, they believed that their prayers would be heard.

The dreadful sounds that had recently assailed their ears, and filled them with terror, had ceased. No more roaring of cannon—no more rattling of musketry—no more shouting.

The attack was over, and seemed to have ended in the defeat of their friends, for as such they regarded the assailants. But though greatly distressed by this result, they did not believe that Heaven would abandon them; nor did they think the fight was entirely ended.

The room in which we find Engracia and her attendant Maria, looked towards

the town, and on approaching the windows, they beheld a great number of musketeers and pikemen hurrying past.

These men were making towards a wide street that seemed to lead towards the centre of the town, and in reality conducted to the market-place, whither the soldiers were proceeding.

In this street were a multitude of townsfolk—men and women—who welcomed the soldiers with enthusiasm, and proffered them jugs of ale, which were quickly emptied.

Part of the mud walls, and a barricade, that served to defend the Bradshaw Gate, could be seen from the window on the left. On the right were more fortifications.

As seen from this window, the town looked like a mass of black and white houses, in the midst of which rose the tower of the

church, surmounted by a broad banner. Very few soldiers could be perceived on the walls, and none at the barricades. All had gone to the taverns, or to the houses of friends, to refresh themselves.

Engracia and her attendant were still gazing at this strange scene, with mingled emotions of fear and curiosity, when the door opened and Don Fortunio entered the room accompanied by Rosworm.

As the latter had shown them great kindness during their brief captivity, Engracia manifested much pleasure on beholding him.

“Colonel Rosworm has been endeavouring to obtain our release, but without success,” said Don Fortunio to his daughter. “Colonel Rigby will not give him a decided answer.”

“He is unwilling to part with you,” said

Rosworm. "I offered him the jewels, but he would not be tempted."

"Is there no hope of deliverance?" she asked. "Are Prince Rupert and Lord Derby gone?"

"No ; they have only retired for awhile," replied Rosworm. "The assault will be renewed."

"Holy Mother be praised !" exclaimed Engracia. "There is still hope of deliverance."

"Not much," rejoined Rosworm. "The town is well fortified, and the garrison strong. Besides, assistance will arrive ere long from several neighbouring towns."

"So you see there is but little hope for us, my child," said her father, tristfully.

"Alas !" ejaculated Engracia.

"Ay de mi !" cried Maria.

"Do not despair," said Rosworm. "Colonel Rigby himself will be here presently."

Your entreaties may have more effect upon him than my proposition."

Scarcely were the words uttered than the person referred to made his appearance. As usual, his manner was rude and overbearing. Haughtily saluting Don Fortunio, he said:

"I have come to tell you that I cannot liberate you at present on any terms. But you shall have a lodging in the centre of the town, where you will be safe from injury, in the event of a second assault by the enemy."

Rosworm glanced at the Spaniard, who understood the meaning of the look, and declined the offer.

"I would rather remain where I am," he said.

"But I require this house for other purposes," rejoined Rigby. "So I beg you will prepare for immediate departure."

Feeling remonstrance would be useless, Don Fortunio did not attempt it.

“I have something to say to you in private, colonel,” said Rigby, signing to Rosworm to follow him.

But before the latter could obey, Captain Bootle burst abruptly into the room. His looks betrayed great anxiety.

“Your presence is needed elsewhere, colonel,” he said to Rigby. “Another assault may be speedily expected. The enemy are moving towards the town.”

“I will come with you instantly,” replied Rigby. “I leave the prisoners in your charge, Colonel Rosworm; keep them here, or take them where you list. When you have seen to the security of the house,” he added, significantly, “join me on the walls.”

Without waiting for a reply, he quitted the room with Captain Bootle.

Wishing to ascertain the truth of the intelligence just brought, Rosworm flew to a room on the other side of the house, which commanded the country on the further side of the fortifications, and perceived that Rupert's whole force was advancing to renew the attack.

Having thus satisfied himself, he returned to Don Fortunio and told him what he had seen.

"Will you remain here?" he said, "or shall I take you to another lodging. You must decide at once."

"What will you do, my child?" said Don Fortunio to his daughter.

"Remain here," she replied.

Just then a strange noise was heard below, and Rosworm went forth to ascertain the cause of it.

On reaching the staircase, he saw that the lower part of the house was entirely

filled with armed men, and instantly comprehended what had happened. A party of Royalist musketeers had gained admittance by the subterranean passage.

The alarm must instantly be given, but how? As he rushed back with the intention of flinging open a window, he was followed by an officer who had discovered him.

“Advance at your peril!” cried Rosworm, presenting a pistol at the head of this person, as he was about to enter the room.

But he did not fire, for at that very moment, he perceived that the officer was no other than Captain Standish, and lowered the weapon.

At the same time, exclamations from Don Fortunio and Engracia announced that they had recognised the new-comer.

“Little did I expect to find you here,

Colonel Rosworm," said Standish. "But since chance has brought us together, I am compelled to make you my prisoner. But I will not disarm you."

"You need not do so, for I shall not resist," said Rosworm, replacing the pistol in his belt. "But tell me, how did you discover the subterranean passage?"

"It was shown to me by Stephen Marsh, the owner of this house, who brought me here," replied Standish.

"Ah! the traitor!" exclaimed Rosworm.

"Traitor to Rigby, but friend to Prince Rupert," replied Standish. "From him I learnt," he added to Don Fortunio, "that a Spanish gentleman and his daughter, who had been seized by Captain Bootle, were lodged here. Thus I was prepared to find you here, and what is more to liberate you."

Up to this moment Engracia had been kept motionless by surprise, but she now

sprang forward, and was clasped in his arms.

“Will you take us away?” she cried.

“Impossible!” he replied. “I must remain here. I have much to do.”

“We will stay till you can go with us,” she cried, still clinging to him.

“Nay, this must not be,” he said, extricating himself from her embrace. “Not a moment must be lost. Come with me all of you! The man who brought me here will take you safely from the town. Come quickly!”

“I will go with them,” said Rosworm.

“Come, then,” cried Standish.

Taking Engracia’s hand, he led her from the room, and hastily descended the staircase, followed by the others.

The lower part of the house, as already intimated, was filled with musketeers, but

they drew aside to allow Standish and his companions to pass through their midst.

A short flight of stone steps brought them to a vault, where they found Stephen Marsh with a lighted lantern.

Standish then left them, having previously confided them to Rosworm's care.

"Take them to Lathom House," he said ;
"and fear not to go there. The countess will receive you well."

V.

THE SECOND ASSAULT, AND THE MASSACRE.

As soon as the firing from the walls announced that Lord Derby had come up, Standish sallied forth from the house at the head of his party of musketeers, and rushed towards the barricade.

So completely were the enemy taken by surprise by this sudden attack, that they could offer little resistance, and almost every man was killed.

From the barricade, the victorious party hurried on to the gate which we have said was defended by stout posts and chains.

In vain the guard stationed here strove to oppose the furious onset. Though aided by their comrades on the walls, as far as was practicable, they gave way after a short but sanguinary conflict, and Standish was master of the gate.

A loud shout from his men announced their success, and they proceeded to unfasten the chains, and throw open the gate.

As soon as these obstacles were removed, the Earl of Derby dashed in with his cuirassiers, shouting with a loud voice, "No quarter!"

These terrible orders were strictly obeyed. Exasperated by the slaughter of their comrades in the previous assault, the men swore not to sheathe their swords till they had slaked their thirst for vengeance.

Headed by the earl the first troop galloped along the main street towards the market-place, cutting down all they en-

countered. Shrieks and groans were heard on all sides, but no pity was shown.

Other troops rode to the right and the left, or plunged into the narrow thoroughfares shouting out, "Kill! kill!—spare not—spare not."

Frightful scenes occurred. Blinded by fury, the men slaughtered their unresisting victims like sheep, utterly disregarding their cries for compassion, and trampling the still breathing bodies under their horses' feet.

In the back streets, the wretched inhabitants were quite undefended, and sought to escape from the merciless soldiers, leaving their wives and children to their fate.

In the market-place, however, the Earl of Derby found a great number of pikemen, together with a troop of horse.

With savage satisfaction, he perceived that the latter were commanded by Cap-

tain Bootle, and burning for vengeance, he instantly charged them.

The fierce onset could not be resisted, and such of the Parliamentarians as were not cut down took to flight, their retreat being aided by the pikemen.

But their leader was captured and disarmed, and at once brought before Lord Derby.

Bootle could not mistake the look fixed upon him by the earl. Nevertheless, he sued for quarter.

“Spare me, my lord,” he cried, “and I will deliver Rigby into your hands.”

“Thou art false to the last, perfidious villain!” cried the earl. “Already thou hast betrayed me, and now thou wouldst betray him thou art bound to serve. I will not spare thee.”

Stabbed to the heart, the traitor fell from his horse.

By this time, Prince Rupert had entered the devoted town with the whole of his army, and the work of destruction was then carried on with greater fury than before.

No such massacre took place during the civil wars in Lancashire as occurred at Bolton on that day.

The soldiers were killed on the walls, and their bodies thrown into the ditch, but that was no more than would have been done at any siege. All the pikemen were killed ; but they could not expect a lighter fate. The houses were plundered, but houses had been plundered in every town taken before—both by Roundheads and Cavaliers—at Lancaster, at Preston, at Wigan and Warrington.

It was the indiscriminate slaughter of the inhabitants, after the garrison had surrendered, and when the town was at the entire mercy of the victors, that stamped

the assault with the character of a massacre. The ruthless soldiers spared none—old men, women, children.

Four divines were killed—one a venerable man with grey locks, who had stationed himself at the foot of the cross in the market-place, and lifted up his voice to denounce them, had his skull cloven by a dragoon. The streets resounded with the shrieks and groans of the wounded and dying, and the kennels ran with blood.

Neither Rupert nor the earl interposed to check the slaughter. In the market-place, as we have said, the carnage was frightful; and it was here that all the divines we have mentioned were killed.

One of these addressed the earl in words that proved prophetic.

“Thou hast destroyed Bolton,” he said, with his dying breath; “but thou shalt not escape. When brought here to die—

as thou shalt be — thou wilt remember this day.”

Standish took as little part as he could help in these dreadful scenes. His soul revolted from them, and he would have shut his eyes if he could to the terrible sights forced upon him.

On Rupert's entrance into the town he obtained a horse, and feeling sure Rigby would seek safety in flight, his great desire was to prevent him. And he had well nigh succeeded.

Discovering that Rigby had contrived to get out of the town with a small party of horse, and was making all haste he could towards Bury, Standish put himself at the head of a score of dragoons, and galloped after him.

He continued the pursuit for a couple of miles, and might have overtaken the fugitive, if a body of Parliamentarians had

not been seen advancing in the opposite direction. These men were no doubt hastening to the relief of Bolton, but were too late. They came, however, in time to rescue Rigby, and escorted him to Bury, while Standish was compelled to return without his expected prize to Bolton.

VI.

HOW STANDISH MET ROSWORM FOR THE LAST TIME.

WHEN Standish approached the town, he found Prince Rupert and the Earl of Derby with a squadron of lancers near the Bradshaw Gate. They had just been riding round the walls, and Rupert had given orders that all the colours taken in the assault should be brought to him.

They proved to be twenty-two in number, and all had been displayed at the Leaguer of Lathom.

“What of Rigby?” cried the earl, as Standish came up.

“He has fled to Bury,” replied Standish.

“And left his army to perish! Ignoble dastard!” exclaimed the prince.

“He has balked my vengeance by flight,” cried the earl, with a look of deep disappointment. “’Tis well for him he has got away. But we may meet again.”

“Think of him no more!” cried Rupert.

“Think of the countess — and how overjoyed she will be at our victory. You must send her word of it without delay.”

“May I bear the message to her ladyship?” cried Standish, eagerly.

“I would fain send you,” observed the earl. “But you must be fatigued.”

“I have strength enough left to reach Lathom,” rejoined Standish. “I pray your lordship not to refuse my request.”

“Let him have his wish,” said the prince. “He is not wanted here. Hark ye, Captain Standish! you shall do more than convey a

message to the Countess of Derby from her valiant lord. Commend me heartily to her ladyship, and present these colours to her. Tell her they have just been taken at Bolton."

"I will gladly obey your highness's behest," replied Standish, bowing.

"I have more to say," pursued the prince. "When I set out from Lathom to besiege this place, I told her ladyship, when my work was done, I would return and feast with her. I shall not forget my promise. She may expect me to-morrow."

"The countess will be enchanted," said the earl. "But suitable preparation can scarce be made for your highness by to-morrow."

"No preparation need be made for me," said the prince. "My cousin's welcome will suffice."

Well knowing the prince's humour, Lord

Derby said no more on the subject, but bade Standish prepare for instant departure; and Prince Rupert enjoined him to take a strong guard lest he should be robbed of the colours.

“Take the party of dragoons you have just brought back with you from the pursuit of Rigby,” said the prince.

Proud of his errand, yet fearful of losing the flags, which he committed to the care of the stoutest men in the troop, Standish departed.

After the dreadful scenes he had recently witnessed, and knew were still being enacted in the town, he was not sorry to leave Bolton behind.

Speeding across the moor he soon reached Lostock, and found the place abandoned.

From Lostock Standish took his way across the country to Haigh, and thence to Wroughtington, and he was close upon New-

burgh, when he saw a horseman coming towards him, whom even at a distance he recognised as Rosworm.

On seeing the party of dragoons, Rosworm would have galloped off, but a shout from Standish checked him, and he waited tranquilly till the young man came up. A brief colloquy then took place between them—being so conducted that it could not be overheard by the troopers, who had likewise halted.

“I can give you a good account of your friends,” said Rosworm. “I have just left them at Lathom House. The journey there was not difficult, since I was fortunately able to procure horses for them at Great Lever.”

“Why did you not remain at Lathom as I advised?” asked Standish.

“I had reasons for not doing so,” replied Rosworm. “I am now going to Wigan. But what has happened to Bolton?”

“Bolton has fallen,” replied Standish. “Hundreds have been slain, but Rigby has escaped to Bury.”

“Lathom has proved unlucky to him in every way,” observed Rosworm. “He gained nothing during the siege, and now he has lost all at Bolton.”

“I should have been satisfied if we had slain him,” said Standish. “But he lives to do us more mischief.”

“Not much, I think,” said Rosworm. “But I must be gone. Night is at hand. Farewell for ever! It is not likely we shall meet again.”

“Wherefore not?” demanded Standish.

“I shall leave this country,” replied Rosworm. “I am sick of the war.”

“If you had seen Bolton to-day you would have had enough of it,” observed Standish, in a sombre voice.

“I am glad I had left before the second

assault began," said Rosworm. "But I have another reason for leaving this country. My daughter has warned me to return to my native land. I have seen her twice."

"You fancy so."

"I am sure of it. I shall obey. Again, farewell!"

No more passed between them.

Rosworm rode off, and Standish proceeded to Lathom House, which was not much more than a mile distant.

VII.

HOW THE COLOURS TAKEN AT BOLTON WERE PRESENTED
TO THE COUNTESS.

News had reached the countess and the officers of the garrison that Prince Rupert and the earl had been repulsed, and though they did not credit the rumour, it caused them great uneasiness.

Their delight may therefore be imagined when Standish arrived and announced that Bolton had been taken on the second assault.

But when the dragoons rode into the

court carrying the colours of the enemy—colours they instantly recognised — their enthusiasm knew no bounds.

The good news was instantly conveyed to the countess by Major Farrington, who told her that Bolton had been taken, and that both Prince Rupert and Lord Derby were unhurt.

For once the heroic lady's firmness forsook her. She who had so often faced danger unmoved, and had borne so many trials with unshaken constancy, now felt ready to sink. But by a great effort she regained her self-possession, and observed to Major Farrington :

“ You say Captain Standish has brought this good news. Why does he not come to me himself?”

“ He brings your ladyship a present from Prince Rupert, and desires to deliver it to you before the garrison.”

On hearing this the countess immediately went forth, accompanied by her daughters, by her chaplains, and by Don Fortunio and Engracia.

At the entrance of the mansion stood all her officers ready to attend her. The court-yard was thronged with the soldiers of the garrison, who had hastily assembled to witness a scene of the deepest interest to them. In front of the musketeers were the dragoons who had just arrived. The latter were still on horseback, and each man in the foremost line carried a flag.

Standish had dismounted, and was stationed a few yards in advance of the troop.

Greatly touched by this spectacle, the countess marched on till she came within a short distance of the dragoons, and then stood still, while Standish with his drawn sword in his hand, advanced to meet her and made a profound obeisance.

Speaking in a loud voice that all might hear, he said :

“It will rejoice you to learn, madam, and it will rejoice your brave soldiers to hear, that Bolton has been taken after a sharp conflict, and all the garrison put to the sword. A great victory has thus been gained over the rebels, and a blow dealt them from which they will not speedily recover.”

Here he was interrupted for a few moments by the shouts of the soldiers, after which he went on.

“My lord, though first to enter the gate, and exposed to the sharpest fire, is happily unhurt, and charges me to inform your ladyship that he will return to Lathom tomorrow, and bring his highness Prince Rupert with him.”

“They will be right welcome to us all,” said the countess.

Loud shouts again resounded. But Standish had not yet finished.

“I am commanded by Prince Rupert,” he said, “to present to your ladyship these colours, which have just been taken from the enemy.”

Meanwhile all the flags having been collected by a couple of dragoons, who had dismounted for the purpose, were laid at the countess’s feet.

Her cheeks flushed, and her eyes blazed as she regarded them.

“At last these colours are ours,” she cried, taking one from the heap, and waving it triumphantly to the shouting soldiers.

There was great rejoicing that night in Lathom House, and the countess promised the soldiers that their cups should again be filled with ale on the morrow.

Standish had little private converse with Engracia, but he thought she looked sad.

He fancied the captivity at Bolton had made a painful impression on her, and told her so; but she said he was mistaken.

"These occurrences have troubled my father more than me," she said. "He is resolved to return to Spain immediately."

"And take you with him?"

"Of course. He cannot leave me behind. I fear we shall be obliged to part, unless you will come with us to Spain."

"I have already told you I cannot forsake my own country at this juncture," he rejoined. "I must go where my lord leads me. He has more towns to assault—more battles to fight."

"Then you will certainly be killed. Now in Spain you might live tranquilly."

"I will go there when this campaign is ended."

"But *will* it end? Never! My father is quite tired out, and to speak truth so am I.

I shall grieve to quit the countess and her daughters, who have been so kind to me—but I must go.”

“Perhaps you may change your mind.”

“I do not think I shall—but even if I did, my father won’t stay. He intends to go to Liverpool.”

“But Liverpool is in the hands of the rebels.”

“Then he will go elsewhere, and try to find a vessel bound for Spain. He means to consult the Earl of Derby on the subject.”

“At first I thought you were jesting with me,” said Standish. “But I begin to fear you are quite serious.”

“My father is, and therefore I must obey.”

“But you can persuade him to remain, if you choose.”

“No—he won’t listen to me. Colonel

Rosworm has alarmed him, by telling him the king is certain to be defeated, and he is all anxiety to be gone."

At this juncture, Don Fortunio himself came up.

"Papa," she said, "I have just been acquainting Captain Standish with your determination to leave England."

"Not immediately, I hope?" said the young man.

"Yes, immediately," replied Don Fortunio. "I long to get back to Spain. If you like this constant fighting, I don't. Besides, I have very grave apprehensions for the future. Is it treasonable to say you will not long have a king in England? Such is my conviction."

"You are wrong, sir," said Standish. "These rebels will be crushed. We have begun the work to-day, and shall not stop till it is ended."

“I fear you will find it a harder task than you imagine,” said Don Fortunio.

“Hear what the Earl of Derby has to say,” rejoined Standish.

“If he will allow the countess and his children to remain here, I will postpone my departure,” said Don Fortunio. “Not otherwise.”

VIII.

AGAIN ON THE EAGLE TOWER.

BRIGHT and sunshiny was the day, and Lathom House had an air of cheerfulness such as it had not worn for months.

Above the Eagle Tower floated the broad banner that had never been lowered during the siege—meet emblem of the heroic lady who had placed it there. The tower itself bore marks of the enemy's shot, but still rose proudly and firmly as ever. The castle walls, however, were terribly battered. Huge pieces had been knocked out of the

masonry, deep holes made by shot, battlements and turrets broken—but not a single enemy had set foot on the ramparts during the long duration of the Leaguer.

But it was beyond the fosse, and in the enemy's own works, that the evidences of destruction were most apparent. In those partly demolished batteries and half-filled trenches could be seen the tremendous preparations made, and how useless they had proved. The exulting musketeers laughed and jested as they looked at them from the walls, and talked over their own exploits. "There stood the sconce that held the great mortar that was to crush us all," said one. "Where is that bulwark now? Lathom House still stands—but the beleaguering army is gone."

"Utterly destroyed," observed another. "But we have got their cannon, their mortar, and their colours."

It was not surprising that the soldiers engaged in that long siege should rejoice. Their courage had never failed them, but they might have been forced by famine to surrender—or have perished in the burning stronghold fired by the hand of the countess. All this was over now, and they felt as men feel when a great task—almost beyond their powers—is accomplished. They had done their duty, and done it well. To their thinking no pleasanter sight could be seen on that bright morning than was afforded by those half-demolished batteries.

To the brave officers who had assisted in the defence of the castle, who had shrunk from no danger, but were always ready to sally forth upon the enemy—the sight was equally agreeable, as the ruined fortifications bore testimony to their valour.

But all within the fortress rejoiced on that auspicious morning—the countess herself, her children, her chaplains, her guests, her household. Never for a moment had the heroic lady shrunk from the difficult task she had undertaken. Never at seasons of the greatest peril—when ponderous shot and stones had been cast upon her roofs, and fiery missiles and death-scattering shells had been thrown into her courts—not even when a leaden messenger of destruction had burst into her own chamber, had her stout heart failed her. Never doubting the justice of her cause, but relying entirely on Heaven's protection, she had awaited with confidence the issue of the long struggle.

At length, her loyalty and devotion to the royal cause were amply rewarded. Deliverance came—the insolent rebels were punished.

Such were the heroic lady's feelings on that morning—feelings that prompted her to return thanks to Heaven for its mercies and protection.

Two persons were on the summit of the Eagle Tower gazing around.

One of them, a lovely damsel, with dark lustrous eyes and a Southern skin, was listening with deep interest to her companion who was describing some of the principal incidents of the siege, and pointing out the localities to her.

“How enchanted you must be that the siege is over!” she exclaimed, as he concluded his narration.

“Yes, but there was great excitement about it,” replied Standish. “A nocturnal sortie, such as I have just described, is quite a pleasant pastime. We kept the besiegers in a constant state of alarm.”

“But suppose you had been unsuccessful.

Suppose the enemy had driven you back, or captured you."

"I cannot suppose an impossibility. The enemy never *did* drive us back. In every conflict we had with them they got the worst of it. Good fortune always attended us. We rarely lost a man, but generally left twenty killed behind us, and sometimes brought away prisoners. Now you must own that a sortie is exciting."

"When I look at those dreadful trenches, I wonder you ever got across them."

"The trenches were the worst part of it," observed Standish; "and I wonder I did not find a grave in them. But happily the siege is over, and since most of us are unhurt, we can afford to laugh at its perils. Have you seen enough? Will you descend?"

"Stay a moment," cried Engracia. "I have something to say to you, and here it

ought to be said. You have fought well in those entrenchments and have escaped with life, but you may not be always equally lucky. If you are wise you will play no more at this hazardous game of war——”

“But I cannot retire, unless with my lord’s consent,” he interrupted. “If he would dispense with my services, I would accompany you to Spain.”

“Ask him to free you from your engagement, and I am certain he will do it,” she said.

“I know not that,” he replied. “He has need of faithful followers. I do not think he will be willing to part with me; and unless he consents, I cannot go.”

“But will you ask him?”

“I like not to do so, fearing a refusal.”

“He cannot refuse you after what you have done.”

“I have some claim upon him certainly——”

“You have the strongest claim upon his gratitude. Without you, Lathom House might not have been held. By the frequent successful sorties you have made, you contributed materially to its defence, as the countess will be first to acknowledge. Lord Derby can refuse you nothing, I repeat. But you desire military renown, and will remain under his command.”

“Only for a time.”

“But long enough to lose me. If we part now, we shall never meet again. Will you come with us to Spain?”

“I dare not promise till I have spoken with my lord.”

“Ah! I understand,” she cried. “You prefer glory to me.”

“No, by Heaven!” he exclaimed. “I

should be far happier with you in Spain than fighting here."

"If you really think so, come with me," she said; "and leave this dreadful Civil War to be fought out by those who like it. Now let us go down."

And they left the Eagle Tower.

IX.

HOW PRINCE RUPERT VISITED LATHOM HOUSE.

EARLY in the morning the countess had received a letter from her lord, in which he told her she might expect him and Prince Rupert about noon; adding that the prince would only have a small guard with him, as the whole of the forces on quitting Bolton would march to besiege Liverpool, and halt at Knowsley and Prescott, where his highness proposed to join them.

This intelligence being immediately communicated to Major Farrington, he gave

all necessary orders, and long before the hour appointed, everything was in readiness for the reception of the earl and his illustrious guest.

The weather was splendid, and the brilliant sunshine heightened the effect of the scene. The old mansion looked its best, for the damage it had sustained could scarcely be perceived. Every soldier in the garrison was on the alert. Cheery voices were heard on all sides, and the aspect of the men was very different from what it had been.

As the musketeers gathered on the ramparts, or on the towers of the gateway, they had a blithe look that bespoke utter absence of anxiety.

The court-yard itself presented a curious picture. Besides being crowded with soldiers, it contained several large pieces of

ordnance taken from the enemy, conspicuous among them being the great mortar

Officers and men, and all within the castle, were eager to welcome their victorious lord and the prince, but some delay occurred that had not been anticipated.

Noon arrived, but no signal came from the sentinel on the Eagle Tower to announce that the party was in sight. Another quarter of an hour elapsed, and it was still the same.

As time went on the men grew impatient, and the countess herself began to feel uneasy, and spoke to Standish, who instantly volunteered to ride forth and ascertain, if he could, the cause of the delay.

Just then, however, a joyous shout was heard without, announcing that the party could be descried.

An extraordinary agitation then pervaded the entire garrison, and it continued till the bruit of trumpets proclaimed the approach of Lord Derby and the prince.

A response was instantly given from the towers and battlements of the gateway, and amid the thunder of artillery, that drowned the shouts of the soldiers, the prince and the earl rode into the court.

They were preceded by a troop of lancers, and followed by a dozen Cavaliers, whose accoutrements were almost as superb as those of Rupert himself, and who were equally well mounted. These formed the prince's guard of honour. Behind them came another troop of lancers.

The musketeers were now drawn up in double line, and as the earl and his guest passed through their ranks the court resounded with acclamations.

Alighting first, Lord Derby held the prince's bridle, while the latter dismounted. Major Farrington then came forward, and bidding Prince Rupert welcome in the countess's name, besought permission to conduct his highness to the presence-chamber, where he would find her ladyship.

The vast chamber to which the prince was ushered through a crowd of attendants, really presented a very striking appearance, being hung round by the colours just taken at Bolton, and adorned by some other trophies won from the enemy during the siege.

At the further end of the room, in a chair of state, sat Lady Derby, surrounded by her daughters, her chaplains, and her officers—the latter being in their full accoutrements. She was very richly attired, but had no diamonds to display.

As the prince drew near she arose, and

advancing to meet him, made him a profound reverence.

“Nay, madam,” said Rupert, taking her hand, and pressing it to his lips, “this ceremony is unneeded. I care not for show.”

“But I desire to do your highness honour,” she rejoined. “I wish to evince my gratitude. You have succoured me, and punished my enemies.”

“Your enemies were beaten before I arrived,” said the prince. “And they have been punished by your husband not by me. Lord Derby was first to enter Bolton, and the work of vengeance was half performed ere I took part in it.”

“Your highness gives me far more credit than is my due,” said the earl. “Undoubtedly, I did my best, and had I not succeeded in the assault, I should not now be

here. But what are my achievements compared with those of my heroic wife?"

"Ay, my lord, you may well be proud of her," said Rupert. "No other woman in England could have braved such a general as Fairfax. I will not speak of Rigby and the others, though they were formidable."

"I am sorry Rigby has escaped," observed the countess. "He will always be an enemy."

"I will have him yet," said the earl. "But let us not mar our victory by other thoughts."

Tenderly embracing his children, he exchanged cordial greetings with Don Fortunio and his daughter, and with the chaplains.

Meanwhile, the officers composing the prince's body-guard had been conducted

to the great banqueting-hall, where an excellent repast was set before them, and they were still partaking of it when the party came forth from the presence-chamber.

All arose, and raising their glasses, drank to the noble Lady of Lathom.

Prince Rupert having expressed a desire to examine the state of the fortress, he was conducted over it by the Earl of Derby and the countess, attended by Major Farrington, Standish, and some other officers.

Mounting to the ramparts, the prince carefully examined the enemy's intrenchments and batteries, and then said to the countess:

“The engineering work has been well done. With such skilful preparations, aided by the veteran soldiers who composed the Leaguer, the fortress ought to have been taken.”

“*Ought* to have been taken?” exclaimed the countess, surprised.

“Ay—under ordinary circumstances it *would* infallibly have been taken. Had I not seen it, I could not have believed that any fortified mansion could resist such works as those. That Lathom House has successfully withstood them proves that its garrison is extraordinarily brave, and its commander singularly skilful. Nay, it is the truth. I pay no compliments.”

The prince then gave his reasons, why, according to his opinion, the place ought to have been taken.

“The castle, I feel convinced, was saved by the frequent and successful sorties,” he said. “They demoralised the enemy.”

“All my officers were eager to undertake those hazardous expeditions,” remarked the countess. “But I am bound

to say that the boldest and most successful leader was Captain Standish."

"Then much is due to him," rejoined Rupert.

His highness then complimented the officers of the garrison on the valour and zeal they had displayed during the siege.

"As to you, Captain Standish," he said, "the important services you have rendered merit some reward. You shall have the command of a regiment of horse, with the rank of colonel."

"I cannot thank your highness sufficiently," said Standish, bowing deeply. "I have now reached the height of my ambition."

"No, I am much mistaken if you do not soon become a brigadier-general. Promotion comes quickly during this war, and you are certain to distinguish yourself."

Standish again bowed deeply.

“In conferring this well-merited distinction on my brave captain,” said the countess, “your highness is not aware that you are helping to keep him in his majesty’s service.”

“How so?” cried the prince, surprised.

“He meant to retire. Don Fortunio Alava and his daughter are about to return to Spain, and he wished to accompany them.”

“Then I suppose he is enamoured of that dark-eyed damsel?” said the prince.

“Let him answer for himself,” observed the countess with a smile.

“Your highness has guessed the truth,” said Standish. “I was going to Spain to be married.”

“Why go so far?” laughed the prince. “Why not be married here?”

“The Señorita Engracia prefers Seville, your highness.”

“But she will remain here when she finds you cannot go.”

“I have failed to persuade her.”

“Present her and Don Fortunio Alava to me, and I will try what I can do,” said the prince.

Standish gladly obeyed, and shortly afterwards the fair Spanish damsel and her father were presented to the prince, who received them very graciously.

“You are about to return to Spain I understand, señor,” he observed to Don Fortunio.

“As soon as I can obtain a passage to Cadiz, your highness.”

“I will give you what assistance I can,” said the prince. “But you must not rob us of your daughter.”

“I cannot leave her behind,” rejoined Don Fortunio. “Besides, she is most anxious to return.”

“Is this so?” said the prince to Engracia.

She replied in the affirmative, and added, “Captain Standish has promised to accompany us.”

“He has promised more than he can perform,” observed the prince. “He has just received the command of a regiment of horse and *must* remain.”

Engracia glanced at her lover, and read confirmation of what was said in his looks.

“I cannot honourably retire,” he remarked.

“Nor can you urge him,” observed the prince to Engracia.

“I thought it was all settled,” she cried.

“But things have changed,” said the prince. “Colonel Standish cannot abandon the brilliant career that lies before him. Nor, if you love him, would you have him do so.”

“I do not,” she cried earnestly.

“Then stay and make him happy,” said the prince.

Standish took her hand.

“You will not leave me?” he said, in a low voice.

“I cannot,” she replied.

“Then I must return to Spain without you,” said her father, somewhat reproachfully.

“But you shall not be long detained,” cried the prince, who seemed enchanted with his work. “The marriage shall take place forthwith. If Lady Derby consents, the ceremony can be performed in the castle chapel. I will speak to her at once.”

Acting up to his expressed intention, he went to the countess, who was in a different part of the hall, and though under ordinary circumstances she would have made many objections, she yielded to

his representations, and it was arranged that the marriage should take place in the chapel at an early hour next morning.

To obviate all religious scruples, it was likewise arranged that the ceremony should be first performed by Archdeacon Rutter and afterwards according to the ritual of the Church of Rome, by a priest who had found refuge in the castle.

This very satisfactory conclusion being arrived at, Standish heartily thanked the prince, and told his highness he had made him the happiest of men.

Her work being fully accomplished, the heroic Countess of Derby had no longer any desire to remain at Lathom; and since the earl was about to accompany Prince Rupert to besiege Liverpool, she proposed to relinquish the command of the garrison to Captain Rawsthorne, and repair with her daughters and a portion of her

household to the Isle of Man, and there recruit her health, which had somewhat suffered.

She would have left Standish in command of the garrison, but Prince Rupert preferred that he should be actively employed.

It was therefore arranged that apartments should be assigned him at Knowsley, which could be occupied by his wife during his absence.

All these plans were discussed and settled before the grand banquet that took place in the evening.

X.

HOW A BANQUET WAS GIVEN IN THE GREAT HALL, AND A
BONFIRE LIGHTED IN THE COURT-YARD.

ONCE more, and almost for the last time, that great hall was filled with company, and when the health of the Earl of Derby and his countess was drunk, the roof resounded with such cheers as had never been heard there before—cheers that astonished even Prince Rupert himself, by whom the toast was proposed.

The lower tables were crowded with musketeers, and by them the deafening clamour was raised.

“God save the Earl and Countess of Derby,” they shouted, “and deliver them from their enemies!”

At the head of the upper table, in a raised chair, with the earl and countess on either side, sat Prince Rupert, whose deportment well fitted him for the position he occupied.

His manner was haughty, but not wanting in dignity, and his military bearing pleased the soldiers of the garrison, who looked upon him as the great leader of the Royalists, and firmly believed he would give the king back the power of which the rebels had deprived him. Prince Rupert was their hope, and the success that had hitherto attended his arms, fully warranted their reliance on him.

When the Earl of Derby, therefore, proposed Prince Rupert's health, describing him as the deliverer of the countess, and

the victor of Bolton, who would speedily free the country from its enemies, their shouts were as loud as before, and it was evident that in their breasts burnt the flame of loyalty.

While thanking them, the prince remarked, "I cannot praise you more than by saying you are worthy followers of a brave mistress. If you were fortunate in being commanded by the Countess of Derby, she was equally fortunate in having such soldiers as you. But forget not what you owe to your officers. Had it not been for their valour and skill we might not be here now."

All the officers of the garrison were seated at the upper table, opposite the prince, and on receiving this well-merited tribute to their valour, they arose and bowed to him, while the hall rang with renewed cheers.

Conspicuous among the guests at the upper table were the Cavaliers who had accompanied Prince Rupert. Young men of good family, and devoted to the royal cause, then never gave quarter to a Round-head. Most of them were afterwards killed at Marston Moor, but they were now full of life and spirits, and enthusiastic in their admiration of the heroism displayed by Lady Derby.

But the rejoicings on the conclusion of the siege did not terminate with the banquet.

About an hour after it became dark, an immense bonfire composed of pieces of timber and wood brought from the trenches was kindled in the centre of the court-yard, and by the time the pile was fairly alight, the whole place was filled with spectators.

At the instance of the Earl of Derby, Prince Rupert, with the countess and her

daughters and the whole of the company, came forth to witness the sight.

The effect was exceedingly striking. As the flames soared up their reflection fell upon the crowd of musketeers, gathered around, upon others on the walls, and on the guard on the gate-towers.

Every part of the vast edifice on which the light fell, was revealed as clearly as in the daytime, and its picturesque character was materially heightened.

The appearance of the ramparts was singularly fine, and attracted much attention as the company came forth.

So bright at this moment was the illumination caused by the flames that the architecture of the mansion could have been studied in its minutest details. Even the summit of the Eagle Tower was distinguishable.

When at their highest, the flames rose

above the ramparts, producing all the effect of a conflagration.

Seen far and wide, they caused great alarm amongst distant beholders, and many of the earl's old tenants and retainers, thinking Lathom House on fire, hurried to the spot to render assistance.

Admitted to the court-yard, they were thanked for their zeal, and not permitted to depart till they had drank the health of the earl and countess.

Thus ended a memorable day.

XI.

OF THE MARRIAGE THAT TOOK PLACE IN THE CHAPEL.

NOTWITHSTANDING the festivity of the previous night the garrison was astir at the usual early hour, and Prince Rupert, who quitted his couch betimes, made another survey of the fortress with the earl, being accompanied on this occasion by Captain Rawsthorne, to whom he made some suggestions.

His highness likewise inspected the garrison, highly commending the men; and examined the stores, which were far better

supplied than he expected. All this took place before breakfast.

Later on in the day, though still at an early hour, the marriage, previously arranged, took place in the chapel, and Colonel Standish was united to the lovely object of his affections.

The ceremony was twice performed in the presence of the Earl and Countess of Derby, Prince Rupert, and all the officers of the garrison. The bride was given away by her father, Don Fortunio Alava, the young ladies Stanley acting as bridesmaids.

Attired in white satin, and wearing a white veil instead of her customary black silk mantilla, Engracia looked charming. While kneeling at the altar, her attitude was full of grace, and when she raised her magnificent eyes towards her husband all were struck by their splendour.

The young Cavaliers, whose brave hearts

were not unsusceptible of lighter emotions, envied him his good fortune.

The ceremony, though twice as long as usual, was over at last, and when Standish came forth with his bride, he found the court filled with soldiers, most of whom had accompanied him in his sallies on the besiegers. They now pressed forward to wish him all happiness. Similar manifestations of attachment accompanied him to the house.

Again there was a large assemblage in the banqueting-hall, but the repast was not so substantial as that on the previous day, nor did it last so long.

When their health had been drunk, bride and bridegroom disappeared, and not long afterwards they might have been seen on the way to Knowsley.

A single steed carried them, and the noble animal did not seem to heed the

double burden. They were attended by a couple of troopers, one of whom had charge of Maria. Eager to reach their destination, they did not loiter on the way.

Since solitude is sought by every newly-married pair, Standish and his bride must have been supremely happy at Knowsley, for they had the large mansion entirely to themselves.

Only old Randal Fermor to wait upon them—only Maria to attend on her young mistress. No one was to be seen in the great hall, on the staircase, or in the grand gallery. No one met them on the terrace, in the garden, or on the borders of the lake.

Time was not allowed them to tire of this paradise—for such it seemed.

On the third day, the Countess of Derby arrived, bringing her daughters with her,

her chaplain, Archdeacon Rutter, and a large portion of her household.

Her ladyship was likewise accompanied by Don Fortunio, who had come to bid his daughter adieu, preparatory to his departure to Spain.

As the countess was attended by a guard of twenty men, the deserted mansion seemed peopled at once. Its quietude was gone.

The change, however, mattered little to Standish. His brief season of felicity was ended.

On the same day came an order from Prince Rupert requiring him to join the army immediately at Liverpool.

He felt most unwilling to obey. His bride sought to detain him, but he broke from her arms, and set forth.

XII.

THE SIEGE OF LIVERPOOL.

ON approaching Liverpool, Standish found that Prince Rupert had fixed his camp round the Beacon, which was situated on the top of a hill about a mile from the town.

At the period in question, the great and wealthy town, now the chief commercial port in the kingdom, and the abode of merchant princes, was then almost in its infancy. But its inhabitants were remarkably active

and enterprising, the position of the port on the Mersey was admirably chosen, and even then there were indications of the future greatness and importance of the town.

Viewed from the Beacon Hill, Liverpool did not look very strongly fortified, and Prince Rupert persuaded himself he should easily take it, but he found the task more difficult than he expected.

The town possessed a large garrison, commanded by Colonel Moore, who had previously assisted at the Leaguer of Lathom. The governor had fifteen hundred men with him, of whom a third were cavalry, and fresh supplies derived from Manchester, were sent by water from Warrington. Thus he was enabled to make a formidable defence.

Like Bolton and all the other towns in

Lancashire garrisoned by the Parliament, Liverpool was surrounded by high mud walls and a deep ditch.

These fortifications formed a semicircle, commencing with the river, inclosing Dale-street, and continuing to some low marshy ground, on the edge of which batteries were erected.

At the entrances to all the streets were gates protected by cannon.

On the south there was a strong castle containing the garrison, surrounded by a deep fosse, by means of which stores could be brought in.

Heavy ordnance were placed on the walls commanding the river, and the port was further protected by a battery mounting eight guns.

The ships in the harbour were likewise fitted up to defend the town on the river side.

Thus, it will be seen that Liverpool, owing to its situation on the Mersey, had advantages possessed by no other town in Lancashire, but it was somewhat exposed on the land side.

As an additional protection from the shot of the besiegers, the walls were covered with large bags of wool, brought by the fugitive Protestants from Ireland after the massacres.

When Standish joined the prince, the siege had already begun.

Expecting to take the place by a *coup de main*, and not anticipating such vigorous resistance as he found from Governor Moore, Rupert made a furious assault on the gate at the end of Dale-street, while another gate was attacked with equal fury by Lord Derby.

Both leaders were repulsed, and with considerable loss, and the prince was still

burning with rage at the defeat, when Standish arrived.

Rupert rarely held a council of war, but formed his own judgment, and acted upon it.

However, he consulted Lord Derby as to the prudence of a second assault, and found him exceedingly averse to it. His lordship recommended a regular siege with intrenchments and batteries as at Lathom.

“’Sdeath! that will occupy a month!” cried Rupert; “and then we shall have to storm the town.”

“We shall not take it otherwise,” said the earl. “We must batter down the walls. Only by repeated attacks shall we succeed.”

Evidently dissatisfied with the advice, Rupert was unwilling to adopt it. He was all impatience to wipe out the disgrace of the defeat.

“This is not the advice you gave me at Bolton, my lord,” he said. “Then you urged a second assault without delay. No talk of siege works.”

“Nor were they needed, your highness, because we knew a gate would be opened to us.”

“Why should not a gate be opened to us at Liverpool?” said the prince.

“The man must be found to do it,” remarked the earl.

“Here he is,” said Rupert, as Standish, who had just dismounted, entered the prince’s tent.

After salutations had passed the prince said:

“You have heard, Colonel Standish, that the first attack on the town has been repulsed?”

“I have, your highness,” was the reply.
“But your next attack will be successful.”

“Lord Derby thinks we ought to proceed by a regular siege. That is too slow for me. I want to join the Marquis of Newcastle at York and not waste time here. Can you open a gate for us as you did at Bolton?”

“To do so you must scale the walls,” observed the earl. “They are high and the ditch is deep. The chances are a thousand to one against you.”

“The more hazard the more honour,” said Standish. “If your highness will give me a detachment of your best soldiers, pontoons and scaling ladders, I will manage to get to the top of the walls. Once there, your highness shall enter Liverpool.”

“I know you do not make rash promises,” said the prince, well pleased. “You believe you can accomplish what you say. But you must see the fortifications and judge ere you decide.”

“I should like to see them, your highness, but I have no doubt as to my decision.”

“If you hold to your determination, another assault shall be made to-morrow,” said the prince.

“I would not damp your ardour,” Colonel Standish,” observed the earl. “But if you make the attempt I fear you will never behold your spouse again.”

“Fortune has hitherto favoured me, my lord, and will not desert me now.

XIII.

[DEATH OF STANDISH.

NEXT morning, before daybreak, in pursuance of the prince's orders, the whole of his force was under arms, and a general movement was made towards the town, but slowly and cautiously, so as not to alarm the garrison.

From the Beacon Hill, on the brow of which Prince Rupert with the Earl of Derby and Lord Caryl Molineux were stationed, the town, with its fortifications, its castle, fort, and harbour, with the grand

river flowing past, could be dimly described.

The three personages were watching the advance of the army, preparatory to joining the attack.

In the van was a regiment of cuirassiers, led by Colonel Standish, which was marching towards the gate at the entrance of Dale-street.

At this gate were two large pieces of ordnance, and besides the usual guard, it had a troop of horse to defend it.

Facing it was a battery, just erected by the besiegers, that mounted three heavy guns.

As yet neither besieged nor besiegers had fired a shot.

But the prince and his companions did not remain long near the Beacon.

After looking on for a few minutes, they galloped down the hill, and each was at his

post before the roar of the castle guns announced that the advance of the Royalists was perceived.

At the same time the battery opposite Dale-street opened fire, and being answered by the cannon of the gate, a sort of duel took place between the engineers on either side, that seemed likely to end in favour of the besiegers, two of their shot having already burst through the stout oak framework.

Meanwhile, the other gates were likewise attacked by Lord Derby and Lord Caryl Molineux, and defended with equal vigour.

Several ineffectual attempts were likewise made by the besiegers to scale the walls by means of ladders placed in pontoons.

Everywhere, indeed, the most determined resistance was offered by the besieged, and a ceaseless fire was kept up by them from the walls, which were shielded, as we have de-

scribed, by bags of wool. Moreover, the large shot thrown by the castle guns, caused great destruction wherever they alighted.

Apparently, no advantage had been gained by the Royalists at any point, except at the entrance of Dale-street, and the captain of the guard, fearing the gate would soon be battered down, ordered the troop of horse stationed there to sally forth and dislodge the cannon at the battery.

No sooner did the troop appear outside, than Standish, shouting to his men to follow, dashed forward sword in hand as if to defend the battery.

His object, however, was to enter the town, and he succeeded in getting through the gate with a dozen of his men.

The guard were then cut down, and the gate kept forcibly open till the rest of the regiment had entered.

Bidding his men shout as lustily as they could to announce their success, Standish then galloped on into the town, in the full belief that Lord Derby or Prince Rupert would follow.

As the cuirassiers went furiously on, a few shots were fired at them, but they met with no opposition, nor were they immediately pursued, for the dragoons remained at the entrance of the street till it was effectually barricaded.

In effect, therefore, Standish and his men were prisoners, though they believed they had taken the town.

Many of the inhabitants, who were only just astir, shared in the belief, and when they beheld this splendid regiment of cuirassiers dashing past, they felt sure the sanguinary Rupert had got in, and that a general massacre would ensue.

Standish and his followers stopped not

either to slay or plunder, but galloped furiously on to the centre of the town.

A few people were collected in the market-place, but they fled when the Royalist soldiers appeared.

Windows and doors were speedily shut, as Standish halted beside the cross to consider what should be done next.

The alarm-bell now began to ring violently, and great consternation prevailed throughout the garrison.

The governor could not ascertain precisely what had happened, though he learnt that a regiment of cuirassiers had entered the town, and reached the market-place.

His first order was to send a detachment of musketeers from the castle to attack them in front, while he himself cut off their retreat with a squadron of dragoons.

Ere many minutes, the market-place became the scene of a sharp conflict.

On the appearance of the musketeers, Standish instantly charged them, but was received with a volley, by which he himself was severely wounded, and several of his men killed.

At the same time he was attacked in the rear by Colonel Moore and his dragoons—the governor calling to him to surrender, and offering him quarter.

But Standish refused, and rallying his men, who were got into disorder, endeavoured to cut his way through the enemy.

He might have succeeded, but his strength suddenly failed him, his sword dropped from his grasp, and he fell from his steed.

In the confusion of the fight, he must have been trampled under foot, had not one of his own men, whose horse had been shot, but who was himself unwounded,

dragged him to the foot of the cross, and there laid him down.

Shortly afterwards, Colonel Moore rode up, and asked, with much concern, if he should send a surgeon to him.

"It would be useless, colonel," replied Standish, faintly. "My wound is mortal."

"Have you any request to make?" said Moore. "It shall be attended to."

"My young bride will weep for me," replied Standish. "Send her the ring on my finger. It will comfort her."

"Rest assured it shall be done," said the chivalrous Moore.

A cup of wine was then offered to the dying man.

Taking it, he raised it to his lips.

"To the king!" he cried. "Confusion to his enemies!"

With these words he fell backwards and expired.

Liverpool was not taken on that day, nor for several days to come.

Finding he could no longer hold out, the governor retired and Prince Rupert entered the town with his whole army.

In the market-place he found a regiment of horse drawn up. Their leader offered to lay down his arms, and demanded quarter, which was granted, conditionally, on the surrender of the castle. The terms being acceded to, the prince at once took possession of the fortress.

By order of Colonel Moore, Standish had been buried in the old church of Saint Nicholas, and his beautiful widow now came to mourn over his grave.

When the news of her loss had been brought her, she uttered a cry of anguish, swooned, and continued so long insensible, that it was thought she was dead.

Fortunately, her father and Maria were

with her, and to the care of the latter she owed her recovery.

Don Fortunio brought her and her faithful attendant to Liverpool, and after a short stay there, a vessel was found that conveyed them all to Cadiz.

End of Book the Seventh.

Book the Eighth.

SEVEN YEARS LATER.

BOLTON, *October 16th*, 1651.

I.

THE EARL OF DERBY'S LAST JOURNEY.

SOME description appears necessary of the tragic death of the illustrious and unfortunate nobleman who has formed the principal figure in our story.

For the details we shall refer to two contemporary narratives, reproduced by the Reverend Mr. RAINES in his "Memoirs of James Earl of Derby," published by the CHETHAM SOCIETY — narratives justly described by the learned editor as "having no parallel in our history."

"The picture is complete and perfect in

itself," remarks Mr. RAINES; "and it is not extravagant praise to say that it will retain its melancholy attraction as long as any reverence shall remain for what is noble and heroic or any pity for tenderness and constancy in the saddest reverses of fortune, in fact as long as there are hearts that can feel, and eyes that can weep."

Seven years have flown, years fraught with deepest interest.

A monarch has been beheaded, and his son driven from his kingdom. Rebellion has triumphed. The fatal battle of Worcester has been fought, and the brave and loyal Earl of Derby, who left his wife and children in his castle in Mona's rugged isle to aid the youthful Charles, has been made prisoner—having surrendered after quarter for life had been given by his captor.

Confined in Chester, and tried by a court-martial, the earl has been doomed to

death. To add to the severity of the sentence, it has been appointed by the judges that the execution shall take place at Bolton, where it is supposed the inhabitants have a strong vindictive feeling towards the illustrious prisoner.

On this point the earl himself, fearful of being reviled by the people of the town, wrote thus to the Speaker of the House of Parliament:

“It is a greater affliction to me than death itself, that I am sentenced to die at Bolton; since the nation will look upon me as a sacrifice for that blood which some have unjustly cast upon me, and from which I hope I am acquitted in your opinion, and the judgment of good men, having cleared myself by undeniable evidence. At my trial, it was never mentioned against me, and yet I am adjudged

to suffer at Bolton, as if indeed I had been guilty."

Notwithstanding this appeal, no alteration was made.

The day of execution having been fixed for Wednesday, 15th October, 1651, the ill-fated earl set forth on the day before from Chester, escorted by a strong guard, consisting of sixty musketeers, and eighty horse — the latter being well armed and well mounted, and commanded by a captain, notorious for his devotion to the Parliament.

With the earl were Mr. Baguley, who wrote the account of his noble master's imprisonment and death; Paul Moreau his valet, and several other faithful servants. To add to the indignity shown him by his malevolent enemies, the earl was provided with a sorry steed.

All who saw him set out on his last journey loudly expressed their grief — several accompanying to some distance.

On Hoole Heath, not far from Chester, the earl was met by his two younger daughters, the Lady Katherine and the Lady Amelia Stanley, who came to take a last leave of him.

Heedless of the presence of the guard, he flung himself from his horse, embraced his daughters tenderly, and then knelt down beside them on the road, and prayed.

On rising he again pressed them to his heart, and gave them his last blessing. Such a sad spectacle has rarely been witnessed — such a father — such daughters — one so noble, the others so beautiful, tender, and loving.

The beholders were indescribably affected by the scene. Outbursts of grief were heard on all sides, and numbers knelt down and prayed.

At last, the parting was over.

The fainting girls, who had sustained themselves with difficulty, broke down in the end, and were borne away insensible.

By the help of Paul Moreau, the earl regained his steed, and the cavalcade was once more in motion.

But he could not shake off the impression made upon him by the interview. His head drooped on his breast, and during the whole of the day's journey, he scarcely looked around, or spoke.

It had been arranged that the noble prisoner should pass his last night at Leigh—a small town, about six miles from Bolton. In Leigh Church had been interred his friend and companion in arms, the valiant Sir Thomas Tyldesley, who was killed at Wigan, and the earl greatly desired to visit the grave, but the request was denied.

However, the refusal troubled him little.

He had become indifferent to harsh treatment, and passed the evening in tranquil converse with Baguley.

“Commend me to Archdeacon Rutter,” he said, “and ask him if he remembers how blood fell upon a book I was reading late one night in my closet at Knowsley? Ask him what he now thinks of that strange occurrence? He will answer, I doubt not, that his presentiments have been fully verified. Ask him further, if he remembers I once told him that death in battle would not trouble me, but a blow on the scaffold would greatly startle me. Now I have changed my opinion, and can as easily lay my head on the block as on a pillow.”

After supper, which he declared should be his last meal in this world, the earl threw himself upon a bed without taking off his apparel, and while lying there with his

head resting upon his right hand, he compared himself to a monument, adding :

“To-morrow I shall want a monument!”

At an early hour he arose and prayed. Before quitting Leigh he was joined by his son, Lord Strange, who attended him to Bolton.

A sad ride thither, for he was full of uneasiness as to the reception he should experience from the inhabitants.

But his anxiety was speedily relieved.

As they entered the town, which had a singularly dismal look, all the persons he beheld expressed the deepest sorrow.

Far from exulting in his death, they uttered doleful lamentations, and many called out :

“O sad day! O woful day! Shall the good Earl of Derby die here? Many sad losses have we had in the war, but none like unto this—for now the ancient honour

of our country must suffer here at Bolton."

These unlooked-for expressions of sympathy greatly consoled him, though they forced tears to his eyes.

But the scaffold was not yet completed. To inflict additional pain upon the earl, the platform on which he was to die was constructed of timber brought from Lathom House, which had been demolished after the second siege.

Not a carpenter in the town would saw a plank, strike a nail, or lend any aid whatever. Of necessity, therefore, soldiers were employed, and they were behind-hand with their work.

The ancient cross that had hitherto adorned the market-place was pulled down to make way for the hateful structure, so that the appearance of the place was greatly changed.

As the cavalcade halted, the earl exclaimed :

“ *Venio Domine.* I am prepared to fulfil thy will. This scaffold must be my cross. Blessed Saviour, I take it up willingly, and follow thee !”

Conducted by an officer to an adjoining house, looking upon the church, he was informed that he would not be disturbed till three o’clock.

“ I do not ask for the delay, sir,” said the earl, “ and am quite ready now. Nevertheless, I thank you.”

Lord Strange, Mr. Baguley, Paul Moreau, and all his attendants, entered the house with him and awaited his orders.

The earl’s first request was that they should all join him in prayer. Their devotions were much disturbed by the knocking and hammering of the boards of the scaffold by the soldiers, and by the

loud talk of the troopers, but in spite of these noises he prayed long and fervently.

When he arose, he retired into an inner room with his valet, Paul Moreau, and doffing his riding-dress and boots, put on silken hose, a rich velvet doublet, and a falling band edged with lace.

While changing his linen he said to Paul Moreau :

“Take care that this shirt is not taken from me, but let me be buried in it.”

“It shall be done, my lord,” replied the valet.

The earl then sent for Lord Strange, who had brought him the blue riband of the Garter, and now helped him to put it on.

“Charles,” he said to his son, “I shall not wear this order long, but I desire to be seen in it on the scaffold. Baguley will bring it back to you. Return it, I pray you, to my most gracious sovereign, and say

that I sent it back to him in all humility and gratitude—spotless as I received it.”

This done, he desired to be left alone, and prayed in private for nearly half an hour, during which his groans and interjections could be heard by those in the outer room, and when he came forth his eyes till bore traces of tears.

Addressing those present, he said :

“I must now bid you farewell for ever. Think not from any signs of affliction you may discern on my countenance that I am unwilling to leave the world, being well assured that I shall be carried from trouble to rest and peace—from sorrow to lasting bliss. Death has no other bitterness for me save that it takes me from those I love. But I leave them to the care and protection of a better husband and a better father. As to my relentless enemies I freely forgive them, and beseech Heaven to forgive them likewise.”

He then called to Lord Strange, who knelt down and received his blessing.

Tenderly embracing him, when he arose, the earl said :

“Farewell, dear son. It is not fit you should accompany me to the scaffold, so I shall behold you no more in this world, but I trust we shall meet in Heaven. Again, I commend your admirable mother to you. Farewell !”

Then gently disengaging himself from Lord Strange, whose arm was still round his neck, and who was weeping bitterly, he bade Moreau inform the officer he was ready.

After a brief interval, the door was thrown open, and with a firm footstep the earl commenced his march to death, preceded by the officer with a drawn sword in his hand, and followed by Baguley, Paul Moreau, and two other servants.

II.

THE HEADSMAN.

THE few sorrowing persons standing around, would undoubtedly have pressed upon the earl, or knelt down before him, if they had not been prevented by the double line of musketeers through which he had to pass.

Even now the scaffold was scarcely finished, and not being draped with black, had a mean look.

However, it was in a great measure hidden by the troopers who were drawn

up round it, with their horses' heads turned towards the rails.

The executioner was already at his post, a churl who might have been chosen for his repulsive countenance; or more probably because no one else would fill the odious office.

The beholders regarded the caitiff with loathing and horror, and their execrations and opprobrious epithets constantly reached his ears.

From his deep-sunken fiery eyes, long black upper lip, projecting teeth, and heavy jaw the fellow resembled a bull-dog. Habited in a stout leather doublet, he wore a leather cap over his closely-cropped hair.

Near him was the block, beside which was placed the axe—a very heavy implement with an unusually short handle—the blade being large, convex in shape, and exceedingly keen.

At a little distance from the block was the coffin, the lid of which had been taken off.

On his way to the scaffold, the earl called out to the people whose prayers and lamentations he could hear :

“ Good friends I thank you heartily. The God of Mercy bless you ! Continue to pray for me, I beseech you ! And may our blessed Lord return your prayers into your own bosoms ! ”

Before mounting the steps, at the top of which stood two pikemen, he paused for a moment and exclaimed aloud :

“ Heaven, I thank thee that I am not afraid to go up here, though there are but these few steps to my eternity ! ”

Kissing the ladder, he ascended, followed after a short interval by Baguley and Paul Moreau. The officer had already gone up.

III.

A TUMULT.

ON gaining the platform, the earl marched towards the rails, averting his gaze from the headsman and the block, and taking off his hat bowed to the assemblage.

Though surprised to find them so few in number—for he had expected a large and tumultuous crowd—he was inexpressibly touched by their sympathetic looks.

On their part the spectators were equally struck, though in a different manner, by the earl's appearance, as he stood bareheaded before them.

To those familiar with his noble countenance, it seemed wofully changed. Skin pallid, eyes lacking lustre, dark locks streaked with grey.

But his demeanour had lost none of its dignity, and the changes described gave a peculiar interest to his features, as showing the trials he had gone through.

In the course of his speech to the assemblage, his countenance brightened up, and his eyes flashed fire as he thus concluded :

“ By the king’s enemies I am condemned to die, by new and unknown laws. The Lord send us our king again. The Lord send us our old laws again. The Lord send us our religion again. As for the religion now practised, it has no name. Truly can I say for myself, I die for God, the king, and the laws ; and this makes me not ashamed of my life, or afraid to die.”

As these bold words were uttered, a trooper near the scaffold called out in a stentorian voice :

“We will neither have king, lords, nor laws.”

Regarding the interruption as a needless insult to the earl, the bystanders resented it by a loud groan, and hooting.

Thereupon, the whole of the troopers, exasperated by the sympathy manifested for the earl, turned suddenly round, and drove the people back, cutting at them with their swords, and chasing them in different directions. Several were wounded, and a child was ridden over and killed.

This deplorable occurrence caused the earl the greatest distress, as he was compelled to witness the painful spectacle. He vainly besought the officer to stay the hands of the infuriated troopers.

“It grieves me more than my own death,”

he said, "that these poor inoffensive people should be hurt on my account—perhaps die for me."

"The people are not inoffensive, and must be taught a lesson," replied the officer, declining to interfere.

So the troopers continued riding backwards and forwards for some time to the great terror of the people, and the earl unable to help them, sat down in a chair, which had been placed on the scaffold, and covered his face to exclude the sight.

IV.

THE BLOCK.

WHEN the tumult at length subsided, and some of the boldest of the spectators ventured to come back, the earl called to the headsman, and bade him bring him the axe.

Rudely and reluctantly, the surly fellow obeyed.

“Friend, I will not harm it,” observed the earl, as he took the implement; “and I am sure it will not harm me.”

“Nay, I won’t answer for that,” rejoined

the headsman, with a horrible grin. "Maybe it will. Feel the edge, and you will find it tolerably sharp."

"I would have it sharp," said the earl.

And kissing the weapon he returned it to him.

"Here are two gold pieces—all I have," he added. "I pray thee do thy work effectually."

"I will try," replied the churl, as he put the coin in his pouch.

"Thou hadst best take off thy doublet," said the earl. "'Tis too cumbrous for thy work."

"You are mistaken," replied the man. "It will not hinder me."

Several of the lookers on, displeased by the man's behaviour, here called out :

"Kneel, fellow, and ask his lordship's pardon."

But the churl refused, and called out significantly :

“ It seems you want another lesson from the troopers, my masters.”

“ As thou wilt, friend,” said the earl, desirous that peace should be kept. “ I give the pardon thou wilt not ask. May Heaven forgive thee also !”

Hearing a noise, and fearing a fresh delay, he earnestly ejaculated :

“ How long, Lord, how long !”

Quiet being soon restored, the earl arose from his chair, and looking at the coffin, said :

“ Thou art my bridal chamber. In thee I shall rest without a guard.”

From the coffin he turned to the block, and remarked :

“ Methinks it is very low, and yet there is but one step from it to Heaven.”

But he caused it to be shifted, so that he might see the church, remarking :

“ While I am here I will look towards thy holy sanctuary, and I know that within a few minutes I shall behold thee, my God and King, in thy sanctuary above. Under the shadow of thy wings shall be my refuge till this calamity be overpast.”

V.

MARTYRDOM.

HE then began to prepare for death, and taking off his blue riband gave it to Baguley to deliver to his son, saying :

“ He knows my injunctions respecting it.”

With Paul Moreau’s aid, he next divested himself of his doublet and band, and then addressing the officer said :

“ Pray tell me how I must lie. I have been called bloodthirsty, yet I had never the severe curiosity to see any man put to death in peace.”

“Your lordship had best make the trial,” replied the officer.

The earl then laid himself down upon the block, and on rising caused it to be slightly moved.

When this was done, he said to the headsmen :

“Friend, remember what I told thee. Be no more afraid to strike than I am to die. When I put up my hand, do thy work.”

Looking round at his attendants, and at the people who were watching his every action, and listening intently for a word, he lifted up his hands, and exclaimed :

“The Lord bless you all. Once more pray for me, and with me.”

As he knelt down beside the chair, the injunction was universally obeyed.

After praying fervently for some time, he arose with a smiling countenance, and said :

“My soul is now at rest, and so shall my body be immediately. The Lord bless my king and restore him to his rights in this kingdom. The Lord bless this kingdom, and restore the people to their rights in their king, that he and they may join hand in hand to settle truth and peace. The Lord bless this county, this town, this people. The Lord comfort my wife and children. The Lord forgive the authors of my unjust death.”

Then laying his neck upon the block, he stretched out his arms, exclaiming:

“Blessed be God’s holy name for ever and ever!”

With these words he gave the sign. But the headsman moved not.

After a moment of dreadful suspense, the earl arose, and regarding the man sternly, exclaimed:

“Why do you keep me from my Sa-

viour? What have I done that I die not to live with Him. Once more I will lie down in peace, and take my everlasting rest."

Again extending himself on the block, he cried out :

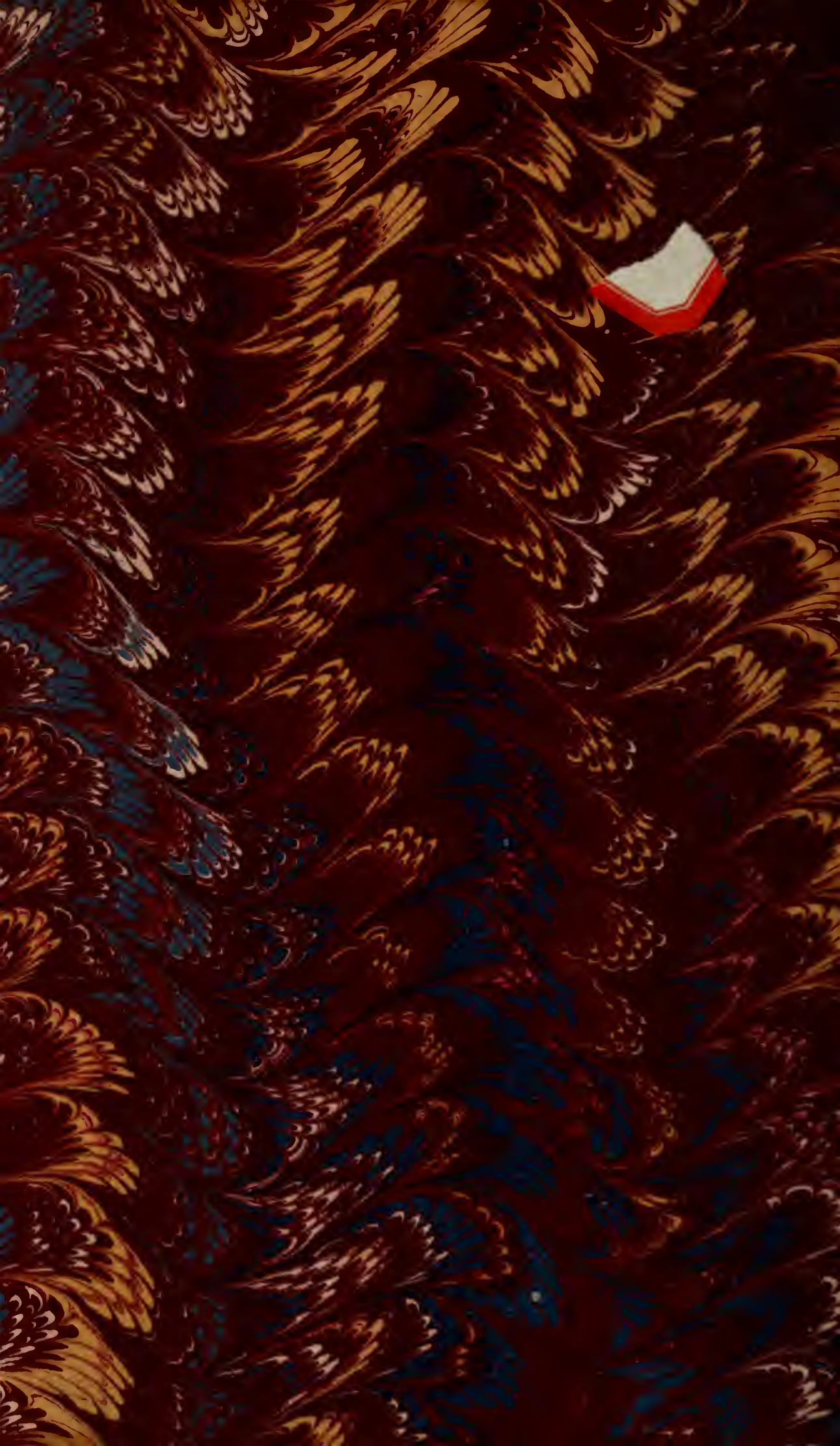
"Come, Lord Jesus!—come quickly!"

This time the executioner did not delay, but struck off the noble head at a single blow, amid universal lamentation.

When the body was placed in the coffin, a piece of paper was dropped upon the breast, on which these lines were traced :

Bounty, wit, courage, here in one lie dead,
A STANLEY'S hand, VERE'S heart, and CECIL'S head.

THE END.



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